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SCHOOL SERMONS

SCHOOL SERMONS

BY

HENRY AUGUSTUS COIT, D.D., LL.D.

Late Rector of Saint Paul's School, Concord, N. H.

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TO THE REVERED MEMORY

OF

George Cheyne Shattuck, M.D.

FOUNDER OF ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

WHOSE BENEFICENT PURPOSE FOR THE PROMOTION
OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOUND EXPRESSION
IN THE WORK AND TEACHING OF THE
AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING SERMONS

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

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PREFACE

In publishing a volume of sermons preached by one who laid down his earthly ministry just fourteen years ago, a word of explanation is due. Possessed of a fastidious, scholarly taste, but obliged, owing to the pressure of his work, to write hurriedly, at odds and ends of time, without opportunity for revision, Dr. Coit expressed always a strong disinclination to publish any of his own writings. Until recently, circumstances have prevented the present editor from examining Dr. Coit's manuscripts with the care and attention which they deserved. But now, after the lapse of years, upon reading over sermons which were addressed to a congregation of boys and men, the words of the preacher come back with so much freshness, searching directness, and spiritual power, to say nothing of the beauty of thought and language, that one feels justified in disregarding what would have been the wishes of the author himself, and in committing to more permanent form and to wider circulation words which, it is believed, are needed as truly to-day as when they were uttered first, twenty or even thirty years ago. It is with the conviction that

they will appeal to many who, as boys, may have listened to them in the School Chapel, that they will uphold those who are now maintaining so loyally the noble ideals and traditions of St. Paul's School, and that they will be found not without interest to all who are engaged in the great work of Christian education as well as to all who are pledged to "contend for the Faith which was once delivered" — that this selection of Dr. Coit's sermons has been made.

C. W. C.

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1909.

SERMON I

BENEDICTUS

St. Luke i. 68.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed His people."

This is the first verse of the hymn, called for the first word in its Latin version, *Benedictus — Blessed*, as much as to say, a blessed hymn, and blessed are they who sing it with the heart and understanding also. It is the prophetic song of the Priest Zacharias, the father of St. John the Baptist, on the name day of his son. For nine months he had been speechless. The last words he had uttered had expressed a doubt as to how this wonderful birth, foretold him by the Archangel Gabriel, should come to pass. His doubts had long since departed, and now his unsealed lips joyfully proclaim the approach of that salvation which had been the hope of mankind through all the ages since Adam was driven out of Eden. It is the last prophecy of the old dispensation and the first prophecy of the new. When the Holy Ghost inspired these words, our adorable Lord was not yet born. Six months more were to pass before the Blessed Virgin and St.

Joseph were to take shelter in the cave used for a stable at Bethlehem. Since then nearly nineteen hundred years have passed, and here every day in the Church's morning prayers, after the New Testament lesson, this canticle is said or sung. We know that it has thus been used in public worship since the fifth century, that it was chanted by the great St. Benedict and his companions at Subiaco about the same period, and in Arles, the centre of Gallic Christianity. Probably, therefore, its use began long before that date, and we this morning sang it not only with tens of thousands of fellow Christians all over the world, joining to-day in the same worship, but in the fellowship of the great multitude whom no man can number, who for fifteen centuries, and perhaps from the days of the Apostles, have rejoiced with Zacharias in the promise fulfilled, and the hope assured, of the mighty Salvation of God. The 100th Psalm, which stands in our Prayer Book as an alternate with the *Benedictus*, is meant to be used only when this portion of St. Luke's Gospel occurs in the lessons from the Holy Scripture, or, as on St. John the Baptist Day, in the Holy Gospel. Otherwise, the *Benedictus* should be used, and we should understand the reason for this constant repetition, and how we may appropriate in their full meaning the words which the Holy Ghost put into the mouth of Zacharias, and which the lips of saints have uttered, and the hearts of saints have loved from that day to this.

The historic sense is in part a natural endowment, though one which may be largely cultivated. As a gift, it seems to be in some degree deficient in our generation. I mean by the historic sense the ability to realize that we, of this day, are part of a great history; that we belong to a past; that in proportion as, through conceit, or ignorance, or want of reflection we lose sight of our historic place, and our indebtedness to those who have gone before us, we lose much that is noblest and most helpful and refining in life. The beasts know no ancestor, and the most degraded of our race know no history; but the worst result of this depreciation, or ignorance, of the past is that it lessens the capacity for faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, which depends upon a past dispensation for its material and hope for the future. One who rejects the Gospel history of our Lord's first coming will surely not look out for His second coming. It is this lack of the historic sense which sets men to disparaging, criticizing, revising, and finally rejecting the ancient creeds, which is very much as if the Israelites in the desert had undertaken to enlarge, amend, or curtail the words graven by the finger of God on the two tables of stone. The result would be ludicrous, were it not so disastrous, and the poetical sense, which is one of God's choicest gifts to mankind, dwindles or departs with the historic. If one loses, or fails to cherish, a deep reverence for the past, his tenderness

and accuracy of spiritual perception also fails, and the generation whose thoughtless indifference or obtuseness excludes from their memory and association as far as is possible their past, loses also a true forecast and a living insight for their future. Like the man without a country, they become a people, so far as it depends upon themselves, without a past and without a future.

This Gospel hymn *Benedictus*, sung at the fulfilment of a Jewish rite, by an aged priest, in an obscure, upland village of Judea, nineteen hundred years ago, sung now all over the world, in the stateliest cathedrals of Christendom and the humblest mission chapel in a backwoods forest, stands as a perpetual witness that the Lord and Saviour, Whom we worship, and in Whose salvation we rejoice, is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; that Abraham and David, whom Zacharias commemorated, to whom the Lord made gracious promises, are our spiritual ancestors in Christ's Holy Church; and that, as St. Augustine says, the Old Testament, or better, the Old Covenant, is laid open, and fulfilled in the New, just as the New Covenant underlies the wonderful history and ritual and prophecy of the Old. "*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel*," which Israel, St. Paul explains, we are, if we obey the voice, hold fast the blessed hope, continue in the one fellowship, and travel on with God's elect, through this world's wilderness to the Land and City of Peace.

For the promise, which sustained the patriarchs in the wanderings, in which the royal Psalmist trusted for forgiveness and plenteous redemption, to them, like the dim streaks which foreshadow the rising dawn, is a promise fulfilled to us, and the child who knows the lovely story in the first two chapters of St. Luke's Gospel knows more than Abraham did, and may have a more certain hope than David. The *Benedictus* is our key to the Old Testament Scriptures, those glorious records of God's dealing with His people of old, those most consoling, sustaining proofs of His eternal truth and providential care. We rejoice to belong to the past, to enter upon its inheritance, to feel that in our branch of the Holy Catholic Church we have a claim upon, and portion with, the saints of either covenant; that humbly following his faith we are children of faithful Abraham, just as we are of the Nicene Bishops and of St. Athanasius, whose Creeds we hold; that Zacharias and his holy wife Elizabeth are ours; and that at this season, and daily throughout the year, we rejoice that God gave to them and to us, as a messenger and forerunner of our Lord's first Advent, their austere son.

I think every one can understand what we ought to be most anxious to lay to heart. Bear with a practical illustration. No really cultivated person, no one with any true depth of feeling or breadth of sympathy, desires to be an intellectual upstart, the offspring of a

generation conceited enough to believe that knowledge begins, if it does not end, with us, and that because, building on the researches and discoveries of our forefathers, we know something more than they did of the application of steam and the electric fluid, therefore wisdom will die with us. These material developments have no necessary, inherent connection with what is really ennobling mentally, or spiritually uplifting, with what is dignified in character, or fruitful and exalted in intellect. Railroads and steamships are a marvellous product of human audacity and genius, and may help as unconscious agents in the diffusion of the Gospel; but they never have contributed, and never of themselves can contribute, the slightest spark of that burning zeal which sent St. Paul on foot by wearisome journeys to carry the comfortable Gospel of Christ to the remotest parts of the world. We do not under-value or disparage what is done in our day, when we retain in our remembrance that we are inheritors of vast transmitted treasures of light and blessing, which it becomes us thankfully to receive and prize, and humbly and dutifully to use. Each generation has its mission; but no generation has a mission or permission to decry its spiritual ancestry, and to forget or cast away its spiritual inheritance. It is a fashion nowadays to condemn the languages, histories, and literatures of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and to regard the prolonged and accurate study of the classics

as an unpractical and unprofitable waste of time. But no man who considers what we owe to those nations for all our political and social institutions, for all our ideals in the learning that educates and the arts that embellish life, would consent to abandon those noble and productive studies, or to pretend to the rôle of an educated man, while virtually in ignorance of what those two nations have done for mankind. It is just to rate a man's education by his relations to the past. There is a sense in which the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim is better than the vintage of Abiezer![1] But if this continued reference to the past is the part of an enlightened wisdom, in regard to the great heathen literatures, how much more in regard to God's chosen people, and the sacred writings which are ours as well as theirs, the Christians' in a far closer significance than theirs who, though their Messiah has come, still refuse to acknowledge Him. The moral interests of a man might not suffer if he were in absolute ignorance of his indebtedness to the old Greek and Latin culture; but you cannot say that in regard to the Bible, or the history and traditions of the Hebrew race. What a burnt-out, dried-up waste human life would become without these "lively oracles of God," committed at the outset to Israel's safe keeping! Efface, for one thing, the divinely appointed day of rest, enjoined by God at the first beginning of history, and on what

[1] Judges viii 2.

a dead level time would run! As Herbert says: "The week were dark but for Thy Light." "Sundays the pillars are on which Heaven's palace archéd lies."[1] How the blessed day takes us back, through the near vista of our own childhood, and our first going with loved parents to the house of God, through centuries and centuries, up to the day of our dear Lord's Resurrection, and then back, through the thousands of peaceful Sabbaths, which to devout Jews foretold a better rest in a fairer Land than that which Joshua conquered!

Again, what can connect us more closely with the past, or be a more effectual reminder that we are not things of a day, than the daily use of the Psalms, several of which go back to the time of Moses; which mark, some of them, the high tide and some the ebb in the fortunes of God's people? We sing or say words which were sung or said in the stately worship of the Temple on Mount Moriah, words which Samuel or David or Asaph wrote, in which they led the people, words the Divine origin of which their power of adjustment to every century and all sorts and conditions of men attest, we of the nineteenth century, just closing, finding them as full of comfort, as adequate to express our needs and guide our heavenward desires as any exile by the waters of Babylon, as aged Simeon waiting in the Lord's House to see the Great Salvation. No other

[1] *The Temple*, "Sunday."

book in the world's history has this universal fitness. No other book has a voice to the heart of every age, and the needed lesson, or bears translation into every known language and never loses its immortal claim. It is all of it an inheritance, all of it, as the *Benedictus* is, a witness to God's love and providence in the past, and so a pledge and promise of that love for years to come. As St. Paul sums it up in the Epistle to the Romans, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy."[1] And so we Gentiles praise Him that He has been mindful "to perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember His holy covenant; to perform the oath which He sware to our forefather Abraham, that He would give us; that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life."[2] So every day we bless God for the fulfilment of promises made since the world began. Beginning with man's darkest hour, that "the seed of the woman" in days to come should bruise the serpent's head;[3] and by the mouth of holy Enoch in the age before the flood, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints."[4] He that performed His promise in the first

[1] Rom. xv. 8, 9.
[2] St. Luke i. 72–75.
[3] Gen. iii. 15.
[4] St. Jude 14.

coming of our Lord and Saviour will surely fulfil this most ancient prediction, renewed century after century by Prophets and Apostles and by our Blessed Lord Himself. "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."[1] All centres in the mighty Salvation, a Salvation accomplished, accomplishing, and still to be accomplished. The Holy Scriptures are a sealed book but for Christ our Lord. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."[2] "No man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth," says St. John, "was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. . . . And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."[3]

Let us, in closing, couple the blessed lessons and thanksgiving of the Gospel hymn *Benedictus* with the special teaching of this day. Let us pray to-day that God's Word may lead us by patience, and the comfort which it brings with it, to embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life.[4] By patience: the words are St. Paul's, it is through "the patient waiting for Christ"[5] that our hearts are comforted, that is, reassured and established, because the Day of the Lord draweth nigh. The world with all its fashions and opinions changes, passes, and perishes. Nothing that

[1] St. Luke xxi. 27. [2] Rev. xix. 10. [3] Rev. v. 3, 5.
[4] See the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent. [5] 2 Thess. iii. 5.

man erects or accomplishes outlasts the flight of time. Think of what has passed over human life and society since Zacharias sang this hymn of thanksgiving over his infant son. Where is the Temple, and the Jewish hierarchy, and the royal seat of David? Where is imperial Rome, its glories, and the legions by which Jerusalem perished? What has become of the names and memories and works of nearly all who were esteemed and honoured among men, even one hundred years ago? But God's words stand, and the blessed hope of everlasting life endureth, and souls are continually nourished by this hope, and year by year our Lord's unseen kingdom increases. From all parts of the inhabited world, the spirits of those made perfect by suffering, made strong by conquering temptation, made unworldly by looking for, and hastening to the Day of God, are thronging into Paradise. That is the future, for which the wise-hearted will seek and prepare. That is the practical issue of this most anxious present. This is the intent and burden of the pregnant past.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people. . . . Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace."[1]

[1] St. Luke i. 68, 78, 79.

SERMON II

TO PREPARE HIS WAYS

St. Luke i. 76.

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways."

When these words were spoken, the child of such wonderful hopes and destiny was lying an inexpressive atom of humanity, but eight days old, in nursing arms. Only eyes heaven illumined could have discerned the high mission which lay before this infant of days. Probably, in God's mercy, the father's prophetic glimpse reached only to the glory of the message, the honour of being such a herald and witness. He did not foresee the hard days of wilderness life, the locust-food, the hair garment, the bitter privation of earthly solaces and endearments. Still less did his vision pierce beyond to the presence-hall of Herod, the gloomy dungeon of Machærus, and the headsman standing with drawn sword over his prostrate son. "Lovely," says one, "is this inspired song, which burst forth from the earth, when the Dayspring from on high first visited us, even as the carol is lovely wherewith the lark salutes the natural dayspring"; but the prophetic imagination

was not suffered to picture the little innocent head changed to the worn features and premature grayness of manhood, streaked and dripping with blood on the charger, or the headless corpse lying on the prison pavement, the hands clasped in death, which had pointed men to the Lamb of God, the feet rigid and motionless, which had hastened over the mountains and stood by the roll of the Jordan, to "make straight in the desert a highway for our God."[1]

It is difficult to realize the stage of helpless infancy in the lives of the world's great men. One never thinks of Julius Cæsar, or of the first Napoleon, as a little child. Nothing in their career savours of childhood. The tenderness and dew of the earliest years were scorched and dried up long before their lives became historical. So is it impossible to picture the innocent babyhood of men who have lived to commit great crimes; of Judas, for example, or Nero; to recall that there was a time when the whole course of their being might have been changed, when, if the right influences had been brought to bear, and they had willingly yielded to them, their names had been remembered with respect and love, and Nero had been an Antonine, and Judas a St. Andrew. He, who in his developed years is more like a tiger or a serpent than a man, once lay in a cradle with unspotted record, and sobbed on a mother's breast, and whatever fearful con-

[1] Is. xl. 3.

ditions of direction and constraint are implied in the modern word heredity, in transmitted tendencies and moral incapacities, there is a time when the child of Cain has his chance like the child of Seth, when God's morning sun strikes the tender growth, and seeks to warm and enlighten every heart.

We are conscious of no such difficulty in bringing before our minds the infancy of the saints. One looks at a Holy Family by Murillo, the Blessed Mother and the Child Jesus in her arms, and the infant St. John the Baptist clinging to her knees, and St. Joseph looking down upon the group with loving care, and the truth speaks to our hearts. This was how they were. This was part of our Blessed Lord's humiliation. As for His forerunner and follower, we know that "except we be converted and become as little children, we can in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."[1] "Heaven lies about us in our infancy."[2] The stage of littleness is befitting. What is difficult in looking upon any little child as such is to remember the possibilities and resulting seriousness of a single human life — the harm, and waste, and ruin, which may be the issue of one of these lives, or the blessing, gain, and glory of another. Could we sum up the bitterness and moral degradation and premature ripening for condemnation of some;

[1] *Cf.* St. Matt. xviii. 3; St. Luke xviii. 17.
[2] Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality."

could we cast a prophetic eye along the desolate, pain-stricken path of others, it would be more than we could bear. The future is graciously withheld from us. Only we have the assured hope that no soul that really belongs to Jesus Christ can suffer the worst harm. Under His shelter, it is with all other troubles as with death and the grave; they lose their sting, they fail of victory.

This Third Sunday in Advent, which introduces the Ember week and its special lessons, is largely occupied with our Lord's forerunner. He stands in the foreground, so to speak, of the picture, though pointing to One in the remote distance. To us, who all our lives have heard these lessons, and been moved by the Advent call, the season brings very varied and strange sensations. The coming Festival is in the very air, in the look of nature around us. Whether the days are dark or bright, and the land snowbound or not, seems a small matter. Christmas is coming. "Unto us, in a few days, a Child is born."[1] He is our own. He is our Jesus, our Prince, and Saviour. He is our Peace, Emmanuel, God with us. From Him smiles all the sweetness there is in this wintry world. From His cradle shines a light brighter than of moon or stars. The light of love, streaming into cold and lonely hearts, kindling all other sweet lights of happy cheer and home; driving away evil temper and impure desires;

[1] *Cf.* Is. ix. 6.

dispelling the illusions and counterfeit splendours of Satan, the impostor; making it possible to have homes worthy the name, on this side the grave, and for those who have no earthly home, making Himself their home, giving them at His Altar all they need. Himself their Light, and Feast, and Guest; the Joy of their hearts and their Portion forever. To-day, the Child, the youth, the man, St. John the Baptist, calls upon us to prepare the way of the Lord, to make ready now, so fitly to celebrate His earthly coming, that when He comes at the last in His Glorious Majesty, we may be among the happy number who join the bridal train.

How then did the child of Zacharias prepare the way of the Lord? What was His training? Origen, who wrote about two centuries after his death, tells us that Zacharias was killed by the Jews in the Temple, when St. John was eighteen months old, and that Elizabeth died soon afterwards. It is probable therefore that the art tradition is correct, which represents the child, John, as brought up in his early childhood by St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin. He was a cousin of our Lord — from his birth, like Samuel, a Nazarite, belonging, that is, to what we should call a religious order, under vows, consecrated to the special service of God in a hard and disciplined life. The body must be trained and governed if the soul is to be free and strong, and the intellect clear and ready at all times for the Master's service. If the child spent his earliest years

in that holy home of Nazareth, he must soon have left it for the wilderness and such companionship as he may have found among the communities who dwelt there. "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord," said the angel, "and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."[1] His outward life was to correspond to His great mission. He was to come "in the spirit and power of Elias,"[2] and so his manner of living and appearance was like that of the great prophet Elijah. There was no softness in his food, or raiment, or lodging. Religion was to be to him the "one everlasting reality." The clear star shone upon him in the long desert nights, and the splendours of God entered into his soul. What is this life to a man "living like John, but a show and a dream? He was homeless upon earth." Beyond, in the eternity above, was the true home. He felt that "he was passing into that country where it matters little whether a man has been clothed in finest linen or coarsest camel's hair, that still country where the struggle-storm of life is over and such as John find their rest at last in the home" of God, which is reserved for the true and brave. Nothing could deter such a man from speaking out God's message, however distasteful and contradictory to the opinions and habits, the vanities and prejudices, of the men of his day. He was a true *vox*

[1] St. Luke i. 15. [2] St. Luke i. 17.

clamantis, a voice crying in the wilderness. A mere mouthpiece was all he claimed or wished to be. Only a finger pointing out the way. There was nothing he cared to gain from man, and so he had nothing to lose. "He was not that Light,"[1] the True Light which enlighteneth all; but he was sent to bear witness of that Light, and that was the highest honour he could think of, and he desired no other.

To Prepare His Way. That was what St. John came forth from the deserts to do when the time arrived for proclaiming that the Messiah was come. The days of his infancy were long gone by. It was long since he had left the blessed Home of Nazareth, and, as we infer from the Gospel narrative, he had not seen our Lord in all the interval. So, about six months after his ministry began, when Jesus appeared amidst the multitudes on the banks of the Jordan, St. John failed to recognize Him. In these few months of ministry was gathered up his life work, that for which he had been born and set apart and trained. He was qualified for this great mission by perfect courage. We learn from his example how to attain that grace, by entire detachment from earthly ends and longings, by yielding to no softness of earthly gratification, by losing oneself in the greatness of eternal truths. What should such a man fear from Pharisee or Sadducee or Herod? His eyes were fixed on the near signs of the coming day, His

[1] St. John i. 8.

ears caught the faint sound of footsteps, at which the hills put on their garments of beauty, and the heart of the contrite ones revived.[1] His memory and imagination were filled to overflowing with holy sights and sounds. He felt the tiny hand of the Immortal Child still on his brow, and the tender eyes of the Virgin Mother looked love and peace into him. He heard the tinkling of the bells of distant flocks, and in his inmost soul the Holy Spirit of God enshrined a Lamb to be slain — a Lamb without spot and blemish — a Lamb, *qui tollit peccatum mundi*, "which taketh away the sin of the world."[2] Why should not the glitter of soldiers' trappings, and the piles of gold on the publicans' counters, the purple of Herod and the diamonds of Herodias, have seemed like the dross they are when brought in contrast with the enduring glories of the Kingdom of God? How could such a man be self-worshipping, or want any personal following, except that he might point all men, and by a true repentance lead them to the feet of Christ? How could he fail of enthusiastic faithfulness to the message and will of God, in whom the desires of earth were vanquished, whose mind and heart were bent upon reaching the presence where is fulness of joy?[3]

I. *To Prepare His Way.* May we not gain some hints for our own work, my friends and children, some note of high endeavour for our future lives? For first

[1] *Cf.* Is. lvii. 15. [2] St. John i. 29. [3] *Cf.* Ps. xvi. 11.

our work here, the work of us all, not only of the half-dozen priests, but of every one to the youngest child, is a work assigned us, and therefore a work of God. Your arithmetic examples, the construction of a few Latin sentences which you find hard, the hour of study when patient diligence should rule, the hour of recitation when close attention and to do one's best should be the unvarying effort — these are as much God's task as the teaching a sacred lesson or the preaching a sermon. The keynote is *prepare*. All of it alike is preparation — preparation for what He has for us to do next, preparation in ourselves, first, lest we should be, like the multitude, driftwood on the current of time, the sport of our chance feelings and impulses and appetites, rather than strong, determined men, who have a rule and a purpose, who bow to an austere duty, and who know that it is by many little strokes that the great work is accomplished, and the life shaped and fashioned until it becomes "that sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, Who is our reasonable service."[1] *To prepare His Way.* For His Way is not yet prepared. Still His Kingdom is to come, His Rule to be established. Still the faithful must pray, "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy Presence."[2] And a man's main work in this world, wherever and whatever it may be, at the plow or the loom, in the counting-house,

[1] Rom. xii. 1. [2] Is. lxiv. 1.

or the law-court, in the school-room or at the Altar, may and ought to prepare His way, to level some obstruction, to fill up some gap and hollow, in ever so small a degree to do something, if but removing a stone or smoothing down some little roughness.

II. It is an inspiring, sustaining thought for us older ones, who take part in the care and management of this place. The work is assigned us, not self-chosen. The school, and all the life that circles round it, exists for the honour and glory of God, for the advancement of His cause in this world of sin and shame. All the gifts of intellectual light and culture, the high powers of the reason, the fruits of the memory, the flowers of the imagination, are His, as well as those better, choice ones of moral strength and fidelity, the resisting self and mastering temptation, the standing up for His Faith and worship in days of religious decadence and prevailing ungodliness. What self-consecration the work demands! How devout and earnest we should be! How stern with ourselves! How resentful of softness and effeminacy! How absolutely surrendered to His holy will and pleasure! And does not the thought of your being able to do something toward preparing the way of the Lord rouse up you younger ones to regret lost opportunities and to look upon your days with other eyes, whether Sundays or working days or holidays, all of them His days, lent to you to lay out in His service? Can you not think of this place, of which

you are members, in a more loyal and helpful spirit, as a gateway and vestibule to your life's work, as one of the stages in which you are making ready the way of the Lord? Wherever we are, be sure we are working, for or against. Here, at home, at college, in the busy motley world of men, for good or for evil, on the side of our dear Lord, and of all that makes life lovely and desirable, or on the side of the powers of darkness — for heaven or hell. And who can doubt of the latter, as he looks round and sees the hell that wicked human beings can make of this world the Lord hath visited? Think that even on this overshadowed slope of time, the Lord's Dayspring will arise, and His Light will stream into the hearts which open willingly to Him; and any one of us, whether older or younger, whether blest with the light heart of forward-looking childhood or bearing such cross of sorrow as He has laid upon us, may go before His Face, may help to prepare and make ready His Way.

SERMON III

MY MESSENGER

St. Matthew xi. 10.

"Behold, I send My messenger."

"It is good to have real views of what life is, and of what Christian life may be." We may be sure that every one born into this world has a mission of some sort, a calling. There is some reason why he should *be*, and some end, faithfulness to which will save his life from being abortive. In some cases patient endurance for one's self or to call forth patience in others may seem all that is possible. The gradations of human life are manifold, from a state but little removed from bare existence to the noble personality of St. Paul; but no human being, however degraded, is to be regarded as on the same level with even the finest specimen of the brute creation. The most beautiful, sagacious animal we know of can never rise to the conception and elevation which a human child may reach, though born blind, deaf, and speechless, with but one remaining sense wherewith to communicate with the outer world. Leaving out exceptional cases, the plurality of human beings are capable

of coming to some knowledge of God, of learning, in some imperfect way, to accept their lives from Him, to take up their work and burden of whatever kind as duty to Him, whether that work is the maintenance of a child or the government of a nation. Conscience, as a natural faculty, varies in men as other faculties do. One has a conscience keen, sensitive, and powerful, and his whole being is pervaded and swayed by it. Another's conscience is obtuse, slow, and slumberous, and hardly rouses unless to some startling moral peril. But none, we know, are so wholly without conscience that, taken in due season, their moral instincts may not become quick and strong enough to do what God intends for them, and to fulfil their vocation, to carry, namely, during this short term of earthly life the message with which He entrusts them. We are all meant to be God's messengers. We are charged with a message from God Himself to those among whom we live, and, though this is usually unspoken and unwritten, to be conveyed by the medium of ordinary intercourse and occupations, unconsciously to ourselves, it is none the less certainly a Divine message. The Advent season is a reminder of the seriousness of this mortal life. As the first Advent, of which St. John the Baptist was the forerunner and herald, was a preparation for His coming, Who was to be the world's Deliverer and Saviour, so these present lives are designed to be throughout a preparation for His second coming to judgment, a

preparation for our own passage through the grave into another world of waiting and expectation, until the shadows are finally withdrawn. We appear on this earthly stage not by a blind chance, but each one for and by himself, with the dower of conscious existence, an existence which even our reason teaches us is immortal. We start out on our several courses where He has allotted us, and with the great prerogative of owning Him as our ruler and guide. The message He commits to us severally is just that message to the righteousness of which our own hearts bear witness, by which they plead for His cause of truth and goodness in the world.

Let me specify some one or more of these messages. Our God is a God of Truth, and His Only Begotten Son, Who hath revealed Him to us, has said, "I am the Truth,"[1] and "Everyone that is of the truth heareth My Voice."[2] Now it is clear that the world, so far as it is under the prince of this world, is deceitful and deceiving; that you cannot believe all you see, still less all you hear; that many persons trade on the inexperience and ignorance of their fellows; that even where no base motive of self-interest is at work, vanity and the love of pleasing produce untruthful ways of speaking and acting, exaggerations and misrepresentations, to which we get used in others as in ourselves, without realizing their falsehood. And still there are those who are

[1] St. John xiv. 6. [2] *Ibid.* xviii. 37.

naturally straightforward and single-minded, truthful with themselves to begin with, and not blinded by self-love or a delusive imagination; who reject subterfuge and pretence in any form; and whose frank manliness affords a firm basis for what is worthiest in human character. God calls us all to be true with ourselves and to one another, not only speaking truth, but also doing it, if we speak in such a way as may best reveal our real thought, and act in such a way as may befit and justify our spoken words. But we may say that some bear distinctively the message of truth to their friends and acquaintances. They hate and scorn lies. They are incapable of deceit and treachery. Their word is their bond. They are faithful in the relations of life. They wear no masks. They call things by their right names. As you know them in society and before men so you know them in their private counsels, in their closets alone with God. They are neither whited sepulchres nor grass-coated bogs which men trust to their own undoing. There are those among us everywhere whose simple integrity of speech and conduct is a standard for those with whom they associate; whose truthfulness is unchallenged, whose very look is a reproach to the wily and double-dealing; whom therefore men respect, not for being brilliant but for being true, and they bear, without thinking of it, God's message of truth, and thus are honoured to prepare and make ready His way. The message of

incorruptible truth is one with which all are charged, in which the many fail. Let us recover our commission. "Let us aim at meaning what we say and saying what we mean; let us aim at knowing when we understand a truth and when we do not." "Aim at seeing things as God sees them. Aim at looking at this life as God looks at it." "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."[1]

There is another message which is, one may say, universal; but comparatively few really bear it to their own honour and the welfare of their fellows, and that is the message of obedience. When we begin life our duty is summed up in obedience, obeying parents and those who take the place of parents. It is the most important lesson set us to learn. If not learned early, it is seldom learned thoroughly. For we naturally like our own way. The little child turns by instinct to that which is denied. Duty is learned only by obeying. By obeying man and the ordinances of man first we come to obey God. And no natural obstinacy or pride of self-will can possibly be a substitute for that steadfast firmness which comes of habitual obedience, doing what we are told to do, or what is given us to do, and keeping from what is forbidden us, no matter how strong our inclination or how powerful the pleading of self-love. "There are, who ask not if thine eye be on them," says our great poet, in lines which sum up the ideal of

[1] St. John viii. 32.

character. For he who has learned to put duty uppermost, and as of course, needs no other eye than His to Whom the darkness is as clear as the noonday. He is unconsciously following Him Who said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."[1] And this steady, undeviating performance of duty is therefore a message of the Lord. It is a daily strength to the many who need example and influence to fortify their wavering convictions. It is a daily reproach and warning to those whose ways are shifty and uncertain, and whose life's work therefore is becoming unreal and fruitless. Let no one of you who has gone quietly on, during this past term, doing your best with small results, perhaps, but manfully and with purpose, feel that your work is unnoticed and unprofitable. Simply to obey — to obey man for the Lord's sake, to do what is only your duty to do, may seem of little account; but so doing, you have been His messenger, and the Crown of Life is His acceptance of "the trivial round, the common task."[2] He does not say, "Well done, good and successful," but, "Well done, good and *faithful* servant."[3]

And I may add another message, which we here and at this season ought always to carry to one another and to our several homes, and that is the message of peace and goodwill. "Blessed are the peacemakers;

[1] St. John iv. [2] "The Christian Year," "Morning." [3] St. Matt. xxv. 21.

for they shall be called the children of God,"[1] so said the Prince of Peace. His manger at Bethlehem is the fountain of loving kindness and forgiveness, and from it streams the light which gladdens all good homes, and warms and cheers even lonely and sorrowful hearts. Many in this world are sowers of strife and disorder, restless and busy in mischief, ingenious in devising annoyance, and regardless of the feelings or the good name of others. Think of having one's history finally summed up in the word "troublesome," of leaving that kind of record behind us. Yet, to that unbridled tongues and undisciplined habits may bring one, until he fills out the fearful delineation of the Psalmist: "He imagineth mischief upon his bed, and hath set himself in no good way; neither doth he abhor anything that is evil."[2] Contrast with such a course, his who goes forth with the message of unfailing kindness, whose presence anywhere is sunshine, who loves to make others happy, who, bright and full of fun and spirits, as he has a right to be, never willingly causes pain, who practises in youth those lovely traits of self-control and moderation which make a man truly gentle and courteous in after life, and fit him for doing his little part toward dispersing the darkness and diminishing the sorrows of the world. There is one blessed work which such a person, whether young or old, is doing unconsciously for those around him —

[1] St. Matt. v. 9. [2] Ps. xxxvi. 4.

he is lessening the number of their sins. There are few gifts more precious to a soul than to make its sins fewer. It is in our power to do this daily and sometimes often in a day. It is the very Spirit of Jesus, and for most of us the best way of really bearing His message. You may think it is a small matter, and has to do with good manners more than with holy living. "The grass of the field," says one, "is better than the cedars of Lebanon." "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven," is our Lord's high argument, "for He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil."[1] In these and other ways we may bear His blessed message, and though without speech or language, their voices are heard among them.[2] Unconscious of this great honour, one may be the Lord's messenger, wherever he goes, and prepare His way, help to make "the crooked straight" and "the rough places smooth."[3] We can carry His message in any walk of life and calling which honourable men pursue. Some of His noblest messengers of our day have been soldiers, physicians, lawyers, and statesmen. The learned and unlearned, the mechanic and the tradesman, employers and employed, all may make life what God meant it to be, and of their daily avocations stepping-stones to higher things, rounds in the ascent by which they climb to the true home and City of God.

May I specially remind you to-day of one calling and

[1] *Cf.* St. Matt. v. 45 and St. Luke vi. 35. [2] Ps. xix. 3. [3] *Cf.* Is. xl. 4.

profession, which has an unearthly sanction, as its ends reach beyond all that is bounded by an earthly horizon? To be the "ministers and stewards of His Mysteries,"[1] to be called to His nearer service, in the priesthood of His Church, is the highest honour that mortal man can attain. To administer His Sacraments, and so to be dispensers of the blessings of the Gospel, "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ forever,"[2] is of all occupations the fullest of blessing to one's fellow-men. And inasmuch as most of you here have yet to make choice of a profession or work in life, and all must have work to do, and do it if you would be anything but drones, spendthrifts of time and gifts and talents, for which surely to be called to account hereafter, it is right that we should speak plainly of this highest and loveliest service, that those of you who have, so to speak, your lives in your hands, may ask how can you dispose of them better than by an entire and hearty consecration of them to the service and ministry of His Church. Some are shut out, at once, from such consideration, by physical or mental disabilities; for some few Providence, by the voice of parents or social conditions, has already settled their duty. Many are, as yet, unfit morally to have so holy

[1] Collect for Third Sunday in Advent.
[2] "The Form and Manner of Ordering Priests."

and beautiful a vision of what might be presented to them at all. They must be exhorted to cast off the "works of darkness," and to prepare themselves for the first steps in the Christian life, before they can carry any good or useful message to their fellows. But there *are* those who have fair gifts of intellect, and good desires, and honest hearts, and healthful bodies, and some power and will to influence others. Why should you not, in thinking of your future lives, and how to lay them out to the best advantage, keep this noblest work of all in mind, cherish in your hearts, till the time comes for open decision, this sacred ambition?

The Christian ministry, rightly exercised, is set before us to-day as one great means of preparing for our Lord's coming to judgment. They are to be pioneers of His second Advent, His voices in this evil day, upholding His truth, and calling men to repentance; yes, and ready, thankful to tell the glad tidings of His love, the efficacy of His grace, and the abounding sweetness of His consolation. What are the inducements to such a calling? Surely earthly wealth and such honours as men can give, praise and social distinction, and ease and luxurious living, are mean and poor objects when set beside the joy of a free service, the satisfaction of living wholly with and for the Master, the daily refreshment of heavenly thoughts and divine studies, the right to exclude the world and worldly solicitudes from one's

working hours. An unfaithful, half-hearted, worldly clergyman, the man who talks of things eternal while he is pushing and struggling for his little handful of things material and perishing, is of all men the most wretched and contemptible. But the obscurest priest who is doing his Lord's work with a single eye, content in any field of labour, however unpromising, to do his best to "turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,"[1] is happier in his lot and more to be envied than the most flattered and successful man of the world, who never in his lonely moments hears the music of angels, never catches in the evening skies a far-off reflection of the "bulwarks with salvation strong, and streets of shining gold."[2] And the need is so great. The Lord and Lover of our souls condescends to make use of us. We are bidden to pray this week that He will "send forth more labourers into His harvest."[3] We can be His labourers in any calling. We must be, if we would stand unrebuked before Him at His coming. He sends us every morning to work in His vineyard; He sends us forth wherever we go, during these happy holidays, to carry His sweet message of truth and duty and loving kindness in our hearts and lives for others. "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world."[4] His Name, which we baptized ones bear, is "as ointment

[1] St. Luke i. 17.
[2] James Montgomery.
[3] The Litany.
[4] Ps. xix. 4.

poured forth."[1] If we do not disgrace it, it is like some lovely fragrance, perceptible in the conduct of our daily lives. Perhaps He calls some of you by my voice to-day to be His labourers in a higher sense, to aspire even now to become "stewards of His Mysteries," to break His Body and pour forth His Blood for the healing and refreshing of souls, to be his pastors, and to teach His everlasting Gospel. Blessed are they who gladly hear and obey such a call. Blessed they who in this world's darkness have the light of such a motive shining in their hearts. Their very willingness is God's gift. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."[2] Where there is a stream there must be a fountain. The love of brotherhood flows from the love of God. There is a certainty and a confidence about God's work which belongs to no other. As the years depart, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. What will it be to any one of us to have done ever so little to hasten that coming, to have cleared one stone from before the wheels of His chariot! To have some title to share in the joy of His Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs, in that great day of ingathering, when "they shall joy before him according to the joy in harvest,"[3] and the companies of ransomed souls, like sheaves, shall swell the triumph of our Lord?

[1] Cant. i. 3. [2] 1 St. John iii. 14. [3] Is. ix. 3.

SERMON IV

MORAL STRENGTH

ISAIAH xl. 3.

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

THE Church to-day, as always, provides the lesson best suited to the time, the place, and those services of most impressive interest in which we are about to engage.[1] For it is the last Sunday in our term — the last School Sunday in a year which has brought to us, as a community drawn and held together by the bond of the Cross, the most varied and peculiar trials.[2] One looks back with a kind of wonder on all that has taken place, and feels that, for such sorrows and anxieties, there can be, and has been, but one Consolation. A better understanding, nay, a verification of the promise, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."[3]

[1] Ordination to the Diaconate of the Rev. Charles Pomeroy Parker.

[2] The outbreak of serious illness and death, which led to the closing of the School in April; and the destruction by fire of the old School building in July.

[3] Is. xliii. 2. The last half of this verse Dr. Coit caused to be inscribed upon the Altar plate, which was found in the ruins of the old School.

And it is the Ember Sunday in Advent. And the special service of this morning is the ordering of a deacon, that is, the setting apart by God's chief minister, to the first grade of the sacred office of one whose work in the world is henceforth to be that of Christ's messenger. "To prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight in the desert a highway for our God." And he, who is to-day to receive this high distinction, and to be admitted with a special gift of grace to the most blessed of all services, is more than usually one of us. For the sake of his godly and noble father, now in Paradise, one of our first trustees and my faithful friend and counselor; for the sake of his mother, once an earnest helper here, now doing Christ's work in another land; for his own sake, so many years, from 1864 to 1870, a member of this School, confirmed and admitted to his first Communion in this holy place, and in all these years preserving a blameless record of exemplary diligence in studies, of perfect loyalty in all his school relations, and pure and upright living among his friends and companions. For these reasons our hearts to-day must go out to him and wish him prosperity. Our prayers ascend for him to the God of his father in this most solemn hour, to "send him help from His sanctuary and strengthen him out of Sion."[1] Nor need it be forgotten, nor is it irrelevant to my present duty, here to allude to those who are to-day to receive their first Communion — to come with us

[1] Ps. xx. 2.

who are older, with their fellows in the School, to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, that is, the strength and power of Jesus to cleanse their sinful bodies by His Body, and to wash their souls through His most precious Blood. For they, too, must be in a sense Christ's ministers. Every communicant is his Lord's witness and standard-bearer. Every communicant is intrusted with a message and has a light to dispense in this wilderness of the world Woe be to us if we do not let our lights shine! if our lamps are not trimmed and burning!

If I dwell, then, for a few moments on the mission and character of our Lord's forerunner as in an especial manner a type and example of Christ's ambassadors now, it may be expected that my words should reach beyond the threefold order of those who are stewards of Christ's mysteries, to all who are called by the Christian name, and admitted to share in the higher privileges of the Christian calling. The greater includes the less. The priests in the temple service passed through the Court of the Israelites before they could enter into the Holy Place, which only they could enter. And St. John the Baptist is the prominent figure in the Advent season, scarcely less so than the Divine One Whose coming he proclaimed. His message and preparation had reference to that coming. So the message and preparatory work of the Christian ministry has reference to that great second coming of the Lord of

the vineyard. In both instances, the announcement and making ready for the Master's coming are intrusted in part to human agents.

And therefore all life is Advent, or ought to be — that is, a looking forward, a pressing on, a preparation, just as, in its present condition, the world is a wilderness, and not paradise. And the voice of the Church, or of individual believers, bearing the message of the Gospel, is the voice of one crying in the wilderness. And as St. John the Baptist had his mission, for which he was sanctified and prepared from his birth, so we must infer that God has a mission for those who, born in His Church in these days, have the light and knowledge of His Gospel to keep up and hand on to the generations which shall follow. However widely St. John's mission and office may differ from that of the most honoured who hold the corresponding office now, still there must be points of contact. What belonged to his character as a man qualified and faithful to do God's work we may well believe should belong to ours. If all upholding of truth and rightousness among men, and all forewarning and testifying of God's judgment, present and final, upon the deeds and intents of sin must be like voices crying in a wilderness to the great body of mankind, who "seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand"[1] — then we ought carefully to examine what that moral virtue was

[1] St. Matt. xiii. 13.

in the type of the *Vox Clamantis*, which drew forth from our Blessed Lord Himself the high encomium, that "among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist," though so far as the full revelation of the great mystery of our salvation was concerned, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."[1] In some very striking particulars indeed St. John the Baptist's life and work differ from that of any who have been born after him. He was foretold in prophecy certainly eight hundred, and then again some four hundred, years before his birth.[2] In the later prophet especially occurs that explicit prediction which is repeated in to-day's Gospel: "Behold I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me."[3] "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."[4] His life was shaped by his predicted mission. His birth was announced by an angel and attended by circumstances of wonder. His parents, in days of moral degeneracy, were pronounced holy and blameless before God.[5] Thirty years were spent in the wild and thinly inhabited region of Judah, west of the Dead Sea, in getting ready for his ministry. Hard living, sober thinking, industrious hours, many prayers, much study of the Scripture, free intercourse with nature in her rougher but

[1] St. Matt. xi. 11. [2] *Vide* Is. xl. 3, 4, and Mal. iii. and iv.
[3] Mal. iii. 1. *Cf.* St. Matt. xi. 10. [4] Mal. iv. 5. [5] *Vide* St. Luke i. 1-25.

sublimer aspects, little converse with earthly pomp and greatness — these were his preparations. By these his soul was filled with those deep and living convictions of the truth of God, which fit a man to become God's messenger. His character was cast in the mould of his mission. That indeed was to all outward appearance a hard one. To prepare for it had involved a laborious, self-denying life. The man who was honoured to bear the divine message to his countrymen was to seek no earthly honours. The prizes of the world must be valueless in his eyes. For the favour of his fellows was to be nothing in comparison with the uncomplaining discharge of duty. To rebuke, reprimand, and warn is always a thankless office. Noah found it so, and the world of his day mocked at him for his pains. Moses shrank from the sternness of his commission. Elijah denounced Ahab, as his great antitype denounced Herod, and fled, and in the wilderness was so oppressed in spirit that he asked to die. Jonah dreaded his mission to the Ninevites so greatly that he took ship to escape from the presence of the Lord. And St. John came forth from the wilderness preaching everywhere, "Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."[1] His personal applications were in no honeyed words. The chief men of the nation must have been confounded at his address: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

[1] St. Matt. iii. 2.

"The axe is laid unto the root of the trees." "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."[1] These were not words to charm fastidious ears, nor was his prophetic garb and untrimmed hair beautiful in the eyes of courtiers and stately Pharisees. And it must have cost a great struggle in the spirit to utter words of such deep and terrible significance to people much like those of our day — dull hearers, shallow thinkers, poor, unworthy livers, only here and there waking to a sense of darkness and sin and want of cleansing, so that they should eagerly look and cry out in their hearts for the promised Deliverer and Helper. Such a mission demanded a firm and resolute will, absolute faith in the message borne and in Him Who sent it, entire self-surrender, that sort of devotion which loses sight of personal interest or concern in the overwhelming importance of the cause, and loving allegiance to the Master; which hath learned lowliness from the Lord's cradle, patience from His cross; and finally, the rare courage which endures, and bears a life-martyrdom, to which the brief, sharp hour of dying anguish is of slight consequence. Looking forward to the end of it all, St. John's mission did seem dark and hopeless and abortive. He was not solaced by a personal intercourse with His Divine cousin. The lovely pictures of the Holy Family and a child Baptist looking with tender reverent gaze at his Infant Saviour belong to the period

[1] St. Matt. iii. 10, 12.

of the holy Childhood. And yet apart, leading his rugged life, and doing his fearless work, he saw as at our Lord's Baptism and bare record; and standing and hearing Him, in spirit and by report, rejoiced greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. Like servant, like master. And even Machærus had this joy, when the disciples of the Baptist returned from their errand described in the Gospel, and the imprisoned saint knew that his work in life was accomplished and his joy fulfilled. Now I think any one reading the Gospels carefully with the wish to gather from the facts recorded of the Baptist's life and preaching, some idea of the great features of his character, would feel that *moral strength* was his peculiar trait. When our Lord asked the multitudes concerning him: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?"[1] He in fact announced, by a striking contrast, St. John's possession of the stability and power of holding its own, which the reed has not. That may be graceful, and it may while an idle hour to see the wind play with it, and to hear it rustle; but for shelter or support it is worthless. It is the emblem of a character which has no root in itself, which is the sport of circumstance, which in fact is always pleading circumstances for its shortcomings or misdeeds. And St. John, like every really noble character, had the force to stand alone and to withstand. To withstand internal misgivings and

[1] St. Matt. xi, 7.

doubts and impulses of pride and appetite, as well as external assaults — those which came cloaked and crafty in the temptation to wield influence for influence's sake, and to make himself the centre of a following, as well as of those which proceed from the blandishments of a court or the frown of guilty princes. And when our Lord went on with this graphic questioning, the oxymoron is still more emphatic: "What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?"[1] For there was absolutely nothing effeminate or self-indulgent about his way of living. He had learned from his childhood up what minds preoccupied with great ideas in all ages have learned — a sort of noble disregard of comfort, a disdain of luxurious food and personal embellishment. One may say this is a small matter — many have learned this contempt for mere ease and pampering of the body, partly from innate manliness and partly by the exercise of common sense and sound judgment, because thereby they are unfitted to struggle with mind or body for those prizes which men value. But this is an age and generation in which the possession of wealth is coveted as a means of self-indulgence, when all the art and science of the day is lavished upon securing bodily ease, convenience, and safety, when the word *culture* has come to mean, in many cases, intellectual effeminacy, and when multitudes are educated from childhood in the unmanly and unvirtuous notion that

[1] St. Matt. xi. 8.

expensive luxuries and amusements, delicate fare, and exemption from all real labour whatever, mental or physical, constitute happiness. Can anything be more intrinsically vulgar than this idea? Or more destructive of all will and power to be really useful in this world? And this is why the minds of so many are prematurely enfeebled and incapacitated for vigorous effort, why they shrink from the discipline of real thought and study, resent difficulty, and never voluntarily take a step toward filling up the void spaces in their mental storehouse. And our Lord thus indirectly points out the close connection between soft living and feeble thinking and impaired mental and moral strength. And His messenger brought no enfeebled powers to His service. He had the strength which comes of habitual, unconscious self-control. And thus we are brought naturally to the last touch in our Lord's portraiture. "What went ye out for to see?" He asked a third time. "A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet."[1] The very word called up to the memory of his hearers, the goodly fellowship of men, strong in their day for God, His spokesmen (which is what the word means) standing up alone, in no weak fashion nor courtier wise, delivering His message, fearless of consequences, holding fast to Him in days of rebuke, content to stand alone with God against an evil world. Witness the conflict between

[1] St. Matt. xi. 9.

human nature and Divine grace in the tender-hearted Jeremiah: "I am in derision daily," he says, "every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name. But His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."[1] That adherence to principle, that sharing the reproach with truth and righteousness, is what our times need, and it was that which made St. John "a prophet and more than a prophet." For He not "only foretold the coming, but attended on the very Presence, of the King." I think it is clear that *moral strength* is the great element in this character, of which the fixed and unswerving root was, as it always must be, faith, planted and watered of God. As in His Light we see light, so in His Strength we have strength. And there can be no such moral strength as is effectual in the struggle with human indifference and weakness without a firm faith in and a constant dependence upon Divine grace. And no one can really lay hold of the grace, which flows down upon men in the Sacraments and ordinances of the Catholic Church, without embracing and holding fast the faith which the Church holds, which was "once delivered to the saints."[2] And no one can work to any

[1] Jer. xx. 7, 8. [2] St. Jude 3.

good purpose in the ministry of this branch of the Catholic Church without a firm and settled conviction that the Articles of the Christian Faith, as she holds and presents them, are true beyond the power of unbelief to shake them, and that she herself, here in this land, and among this English-speaking people, is that true branch of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church of Divine commission and authenticity whom men should hear and obey. No man, in these times, can do his required work as a minister and steward of Christ's mysteries without such a depth of interior conviction of the Mystery of the Holy Incarnation and the innumerable blessings which flow to us men therefrom as may make, in a humble, but very real sense, our Lord's words to Simon apply to him: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven."[1] A wise modern writer has said that no amount of external evidence in the way of proof of the truth of Christianity is worth anything in the way of saving a human soul. There is always as much to be said on one side as the other, because, just as Archimedes could not move the earth without a fulcrum, so there must be something taken for granted in all external evidence which a rigid logician might demur to grant. It is not the fact of Adam's fall and its consequences to the human race which in the first place really reach men's hearts, but the individual man's fall

[1] St. Matt. xvi. 17.

pressed home upon him from his own certain convictions. Not because Adam fell, and the race fell in him, but because you have fallen, therefore you need a Saviour, and Divine light and life are indispensable. Unless St. John the Baptist had believed in the truth of his message and the reality of his commission as powerfully as he believed in his own existence, his testimony would have been very feeble and wavering. He would have been violently shaken by the doubts and quite scientific questions of the chief priests and Pharisees; and he would have broken down altogether in the chill dungeons of Machærus. Moral strength, that is, the moral strength of a Christian, grows out of his union with his Lord and Master. How can he live the life of faith without faith? "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak."[1]

And on this last Sunday I cannot ask you to think of anything more important or needful. I address myself for a moment to all the members of this congregation, for we all have a work to do in the world. No life is flung idly and unmeaningly into these shadows of time. No life is fortuitous. The youngest has his mission to fulfil in this world. He is God's creature, and he has been sent here to go through the journey of life with an errand and a purpose. Strength ought to be his attri-

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 13.

bute; victory his aim. The ministers and stewards of Christ's mysteries have indeed a superadded commission, a far heavier burden of solicitude and responsibility. Their mission is the greatest; their lives, if they are faithful, the happiest; with a wider range, with deeper sympathies, with higher powers of blessing, than those of other men. But "what was done in the Old Testament by single persons as setting forth that Holy One, Who was to come from God, is, since His coming, done by many." Now "many messengers go forth to speak of Christ's coming," and to prepare His Way. "Their sound is gone out into all lands; and their words into the ends of the world."[1] "The little one hath become a thousand."[2] They go forth as a "great cloud of witnesses."[3] It is safe to say that every one of us here shares in that mission. Each of us has his part to do in preparing the way for our Lord's second coming. He is helping to hasten or to retard it. To each of us are committed talents in various degrees, means of influence, capacities for goodness, opportunities to learn God's will and to obtain the power to do it; time, "a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away."[4] There is the unobtrusive, effective force of example, responsibility for which clings to each of us; which, if pure and holy, does more for the cause of righteousness than our

[1] Ps. xix. 4.
[2] Is. lx. 22.
[3] Heb. xii. 1.
[4] Eccles. iii. 6.

best words can — unless it be the words of fervent prayer. We are each holding this light of example out to one another, to mislead or to guide, to assist or to betray. And by this, by the actual tone of our daily lives, rather than by any mere words or professions, we are preparing ourselves for the Great Day of our Lord's coming, and helping others to prepare; or we are like the unfaithful servants and the unwise virgins, losing our own day of grace, neglecting the time of our visitation, hindering the progress of Christ's Kingdom in this world and delaying the hour which will put an end to all these toils and struggles, and bring to His Church the blissful day when "the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."[1] And since the carrying out this mission is very hard for our human frailty in a world which seems to grow more and more a wilderness of temptation, and since to keep Christ's pure Gospel in our hearts, and to illustrate it quietly and steadfastly in our lives, is more than we can do of ourselves in the face of the evil influences around us, which oppose and work upon the too yielding and congenial evil within us, we must seek to obtain that moral strength which is not an earthly product, which may enable us, like St. John, to hold fast to conscience and to the knowledge we have of duty, and to cleave to our Lord and Saviour, and to stand up for Him and do Him honour wherever and in

[1] Is. lx. 20.

whatever company we chance to be. It seems to me to-day that what you need most, what we all need and must have, if we are to fulfil our mission and make our lives what God means them to be, is *moral strength* — the strength to choose the way of righteousness, the strength to resist and overcome every obstacle which obstructs our Lord's free access to us, the strength to do always what our best reason tells us is for our true happiness, and the strength to persevere, no matter who or what discourages, or withholds, until we have the power to say "No" to every enemy of God, and the will to say "Yes" to every slightest call to duty and every motion, however gentle, of His good Spirit in our souls. And this can only come for us, as it did for St. John, by putting ourselves into God's hands to be moulded and formed and invigorated by Him. The self-control of real Christian manhood, of Christ's true messengers, must be learned by daily prayer and practice, by hurrying to obey the first suggestion of conscience, and by resolutely shutting the ears to the first solicitation of evil. Let us ask Him to-day to make the first beginning of that essential grace within us before the dawning of the Christmas Day. He bears Christ's message best who obeys it best. If He has prepared your hearts and has transplanted thither a little root of His own immortal Strength, then you may hope to have Christ formed in you, may hope, as the years come and go, to hear His voice ever crying in the lonely places of your

spiritual being, until you perforce take up the cry, and while you do your best to prepare His way and make His paths straight for and in yourself, find, to your joy and endless comfort, that you have been doing it for others also. May the Pastor of pastors deepen in your heart the image of His own most perfect and holy life! May He give you in the Apostle's glorious words, not "the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind!"[1] May He, Who alone can, help you to do your allotted work, and to fulfil His gracious purpose in giving it to you to do!

One closing word to you, who are both my child and friend, my scholar and my helper, for whom may our Lord have in store years of happy blessed work for Himself, with golden sheaves of harvest! Begin slowly and patiently, and with self distrust. For your own sake, you cannot think too much of the work, or too humbly of the worker. Remember Him, Who was content to remain thirty years in obscurity, before He came forth with the open manifestation of Himself and His mission to the world. Whatever we do for others, we must do first for ourselves.

[1] 2 Tim. i. 7.

SERMON V

CHRISTIAN COURTESY

ROMANS xii. 10.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."

THE Bible is full of the sweet lessons of Christian courtesy. It sets forth the character of the gentleman. A great writer[1] has said "that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who never inflicts pain. He avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast, all clashing of opinion or collision of feeling, all restraint or suspicion or gloom or resentment, his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant, and merciful toward the absurd. He can recollect to whom he is speaking, he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favours while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never

[1] J. H. Newman: "Idea of a University."

takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out." The description fits all periods and all conditions of life. What finer gentleman than Abraham? What more perfect one than he who wrote the words of the text? And it is the confession of an unbeliever that there is something in the character of our Blessed Lord, (leaving religious faith quite out of the question), of more sweetness and majesty, more likely to work a change in the mind of man by the contemplation of its idea alone than any other to be found in history, whether actual or fictitious. Alike by its precepts and its illustrious examples the Bible moulds the character of a gentleman. The most illiterate and simple nature, in the degree in which it is moved by them, becomes more gentle and more genial. "A Christian," says one, "is God's gentleman. A gentleman, in the vulgar superficial way of understanding the word, is the devil's Christian. We are misled," he continues, "by etymology, and because a gentleman was originally *homo gentilis*, people seem to fancy they shall lose caste unless they act as Gentiles."

To-day's Epistle[1] seems to spread out as it were into our whole life, and into all circumstances of our condition, the same lesson of love which the Gospel teaches. It is the unfolding of the universal law of charity into every department and duty of a Christian.

[1] The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

Thus we have here a full, graphic picture of a Christian's life. There is nothing high-flown in St. Paul's precepts, nothing out of the common way about them. They have to do with ordinary men; conduct to men is to be the test of true heroism, of a living, active goodness. "We ourselves," says the Apostle elsewhere, "were sometimes . . . serving divers lusts, ... living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared."[1] How immense the contrast! All would have been in vain, had not Christ been first manifested to mankind as we read of Him in the Gospels, as having in Himself all the fulness of the Godhead, and most able and willing to work this change from selfish nature to unselfish grace. And so, in verses like the lovely one which I have read for my text, we are brought in company with Christ. We look from a nearer distance upon His face of love, compassion and holiness, which is the glory of the new covenant.

It is not enough to be without evil qualities — envy, hatred, and malice — though that is a great step forward; we must possess their opposites. It is not enough, for example, to "abhor that which is evil"; we must "cleave to that which is good."[2] It is a very different thing to be without a vice and to possess a virtue. In fact, the not doing good may itself amount

[1] Titus iii. 3, 4. [2] Rom. xii. 9.

to doing evil. According to our Lord's rule of judgment, men are condemned for what they have left undone. The omission of good is punished. Christianity is not merely passive and negative. We are to bring forth fruits — the fruits of the Spirit — peace, long-suffering, and gentleness. It is no use to say of an evil habit, a bad temper, or an obstinate, mulish will: "Oh, this is my constitutional infirmity. I cannot help it. I have always been like this," and so on in that silly, self-excusing fashion which betrays our fallen nature. The Gospel makes no allowance for the wilful indulgence of known sin. We are not to look into our memory, but into our opportunities. Wherefore, St. James says, "He giveth more, or greater, grace."[1] Why? For the very purpose that we vanquish our evil habits and tempers, that we grow into likeness to Him Who "is kind to the unthankful and to the evil,"[2] "Who crowneth us, therefore, with mercy and loving-kindness."[3]

"Be ye kindly affectioned one to another." The command is positive. It inculcates a habit of mind, and not a series of isolated actions. Kindness is the overflowing of self upon others, the putting others in the place of self, the treating others as we wish to be treated ourselves. It begins in one's unspoken habit of thought. It produces just thoughts about our fellow-men, for kindness has been well styled the amiability

[1] St. James iv. 6. [2] St. Luke vi. 35. [3] Ps. ciii. 4.

of justice. Think how far unfounded prejudices and hasty judgments influence our unfavourable conclusions concerning large bodies of men, whole nations, political or religious parties, and sets of people. How peremptory our condemnation of a person who belongs to such and such a sect or party! How sweeping our sentence on his character and claims upon us, and how unfair and unkind it is likely to be! What is our instinctive first impression about persons in the same social class with ourselves, of the same occupation, whom self-love prompts us to regard as rivals rather than fellow-workers? Are we quick to impute low motives to them? Do we hear their persons or their work disparaged with pleasure? Do we take it for granted that they are in some way inferior to ourselves, if not in methods and results, at least in aims and aspirations? I do not mean that we express this openly in words; but if it gives colour to one's thought, then it affects sympathies and judgment, the expression of opinion, and in the end our conduct; and our Lord must condemn it, for it is the very opposite of His Spirit. "Be of the same mind one toward another;"[1] have fellow-feeling, that is, sympathy; try to put yourself in his place. True kindness thinks the best it can of every one, and of every class and set of people. True kindness wishes well to every human being, and hates to hear of any one's falls and failures, and grieves over others'

[1] Rom. xii. 16.

misfortunes, and is unwilling to thrive at the cost of a brother's overthrow. Kindness is humility's twin. It cannot live and grow in any one who cherishes a habit of looking down on others because of some fancied superiority of culture or social position, or fortune. That surely is an unwholesome frame of mind. It blinds us to the truth about ourselves. It makes us objects of pity and wonder to the holy angels. When we try to think of ourselves as God thinks of us, then we know how low we stand, and how wholly dependent we are for acceptance on His mercy and forbearance. And His love begets love. We come to cherish feelings of unfeigned kindness to all we meet and know of, not because they all equally deserve it, but because we love God. God is so kind to us, we so need His loving kindness, which is unpurchased, undeserved, and unrequited by us, that we begin to feel in our own hearts kindness toward our fellows, till none are indifferent to us, or shut out from our sympathy for whom Christ died. In this, as in so many other ways, "the Love of Christ constraineth us."[1]

And words and actions are the index of our thoughts. It is easier to have a general sentiment of kindness toward mankind at large than to show this kindness in speech and conduct to the individuals who are nearest to us, with whom we are in daily intercourse, with some of whom perhaps in daily friction. The tongue is a

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14.

great revealer. The law of kindness on the tongue is surely the issue of prevailing kindness in the heart. The habit of speaking kindly of and to others reacts by producing kindly thoughts of them. Suppose every morning we considered how to give pleasure to some one with whom we live, who perhaps is not very congenial to us. Suppose we resolved always to employ those little courteous formulas which only thoughtless or selfish persons find superfluous, such as the morning salutation, the "Good night" at the end of the day, the "Thank you," for the least little kindness, the expressions, "Have the goodness," "Be so kind," "If you please," which should always preface a service asked; the gracious salutation of at least a smile when we meet; never to say without cause an unpleasant word to or of any one; never to forget what has been personified as "the angel of little attentions." Do you not see that by cultivating this kindly habit of courteous words and manners you are cultivating also a great Christian virtue, and that the Lord will know your motive and reward it? How many would be cheered and helped on to better things if this were our daily rule of speech and action! How many would be won from rude and sullen and forbidding ways, from self-concentration, and hardness! For true kindness brings out all that is best in a person who might otherwise show only his unlovely side and ruggeder tempers. And when it comes to such acts of self-denying love as

oblige us to go out of our way, to give up ease and comfort, and that for those who have no special claim upon us, then such acts become natural, unstrained, and full of tender-heartedness, *misericordia*, making room in our hearts for others' sorrows, nay, having compassion for their sinfulness which is their deepest misery. It needs a quick eye to see and apply our kindness aright, so that it shall not make a person feel burdened by obligation and half resent the burden. And that comes of true tender-heartedness, which cannot look upon distress or pain without desiring to alleviate it, to pour in the oil and wine of an active, practical sympathy. It is the privilege of our Christian calling to serve, console, comfort, and encourage those with whom we have to do, to contribute our mite toward lessening the great mass of human sorrow, of drying up the mighty overflowing stream of human tears. In His love and pity, our Lord redeemed us. "He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."[1] And so all His true children will follow in His steps. They will bear one another's burdens.[2] They will do the little kindly acts permitted them. They will gladly seize upon their daily opportunities to serve Him in the persons of their brethren. Nothing is too small for love's notice. A word of timely praise for a poor depressed child may be like a cup of cold water in the drought of summer. A heart which believed itself

[1] *Cf.* Is. liii. 4 and St. Matt. viii. 17. [2] Gal. vi. 2.

incapable of anything praiseworthy feels, since we have told it so, that it is still capable of something, and makes a corresponding effort. The thought of being still useful, and even valued, restores and revives it. And this prepares one for giving that crowning proof of having really put on Christ, namely, the power and the will to forgive those who have injured and dealt unfairly with us; to forgive their wanton and unmannerly speeches, their positive unkindness; so to forgive as not to have one lingering drop of bitterness or resentment in our hearts. For our Lord does not lay down so many forgivenesses, and then so much Paradise; but a forgiving heart and Paradise forever. Surely none can do the ten-thousandth part of wrong to us which we have done and do, day by day, in neglecting to love and praise and serve, in continually disobeying and offending our merciful God. Would we have mercy at His hands, would we have our sins washed wholly away in His Precious Blood, then we will strive wholly and without reserve to forgive all, even him who has most grievously wronged and wounded us.

Now, in conclusion, do not our reasons and our consciences assent to this lovely rule of our Christian calling? Is it not true that through love, humility, and meekness lies the path to the heart of man? Is it not also true that those who give themselves in bondage to their senses become incapable of feeling or even

apprehending true friendship, of exercising genuine kindness and courtesy, of being kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another, or of having any regard to the Gospel precept, "Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye"?[1] Must not one seek to be pure in heart if he would really exercise these exquisite graces? And is not one who sets himself with all his powers to obey this rule, however imperfectly, approaching so far the Apostolic standard of Christian kindness? Will not such an one deserve to be considered and called a true gentleman? But ah! there is something indefinitely higher than that. For this course of patient, resolute kindness unites us even here with those, the truly kind and gentle and forgiving, who have wrought righteousness and won their Crown —

> And these lowly paths we tread
> Are the same where they were led,
> Very sacred grown and sweet,
> Trodden by immortal feet —
> Trodden once, oh, best of all!
> By the Feet at which they fall

— above all, with Him Who loved us before we ever had power of thought to love Him; Who became one of us that He might make us like Himself.

[1] Col. iii. 13.

SERMON VI

THE LORD IS ON MY SIDE

PSALM cxviii. 6.

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"

OR, AS in the margin, "The Lord is for me." What glorious and comforting words! What a keynote for the year! What fulness of encouragement and strength and hope in them! What a manifestation of God's love and caretaking! What an exhortation to men, to all of us, to make the words our own — to find out and fulfil the conditions on which alone they may be ours! The words fit all seasons and stages of our mortal life. Therefore they fit this season of the Epiphany which is a sort of continuation of Christmas, a dwelling upon and expanding of the Christmas theme. "God manifest in the flesh."[1] "Emmanuel, God with us."[2] For God with us is surely *God for us*. And if one can truly say, *God for us*, if he is a living member of that Body which has the right to say, *God for us*, then may he also say, *God for me*. In the words of the text, *The Lord is on my side*.

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [2] St. Matt. i. 23.

Let us try for a moment to understand what it is for one of us really to have God *on his side.*

I. For it must mean, first, that God will look out for him, both body and soul. If any one here on earth promises to be on our side, it means as much as this: that he will be a friend and look out for us, for our best interests, for the interests of the work or cause with which we are identified. If a man is backed by one faithful friend who feels for, works for, looks out for him, his strength and courage are doubled. There are four eyes, four hands, four feet for two. It is an unspeakable comfort to have a true, warm-hearted fellow-being thoroughly for one. Transfer the seconding from man to God. If the All-Wise looks out for me, He will know what is my real good. If the All-Powerful looks out for me, His seconding will be effectual. I need not fear. The Shepherd of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.[1] We do not know what is best for ourselves or our friends. We wish for them long life and health, riches and prosperity and honour. The man, on whose side God is, may not always thrive in body, or in material comforts. God may be for him. What we call fortune may be against him. Usually the man's bodily welfare will be secured. God often blesses visibly His chosen, and rewards their trust in Him by such things as men desire. But sometimes not. In any case He is looking out for them

[1] *Vide.* Ps. cxxi. 4.

though His wind fans the fire which consumes the martyr at the stake, and His waves swallow up the man who has prayed night and day for His protection, and has rejoiced under the shadow of His wings. For He never makes the mistake of short-sighted man, nor puts that last which should stand first, nor sets the transient and visible above the unseen and eternal. As in the psalm, "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; yea, it is even He that shall keep thy soul,"[1] it is so that in a man's worst earthly trials, poverty, bereavement, disappointment, and earthly loss, he may be most certain that the Lord is on his side. Earthly losses may be heavenly gains. By whatever path God leads, if He does lead, victory is won, the goal is reached, and the end of man's existence is attained. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me."[2]

II. And again. Not only does having God for us imply that He will look out for us both in body and soul, that His providence, which ordereth all things in heaven and earth, will order all things to work together for good to those on whose side He is; but the words also mean that He will take a man's part, will be his champion and advocate in his struggles, fight his battles for him and with him, be his sure defence against all his enemies. Our spiritual life, like our bodily life, struggles for existence. Of no one can it be truly said

[1] Ps. cxxi. 7. [2] *Ibid.* xxiii. 4.

that he has not an enemy in the world. The world itself is an enemy to what is best in him. Success makes enemies. An unblemished life, which maintains a high standard of truth and duty, makes enemies. Men know that such an one is better than they are. They suspect that he must be happier than they. Therefore they admire and envy and hate him. Let a man walk ever so circumspectly, be ever so patient and tender-hearted, still, if he is a *man*, if he is true to his convictions, true to his Church, true to his God, he will find some in the world around him who, for causes perhaps the most trivial, are unfriendly, who would rejoice to see him down. And suppose him to be so blessed in his own temper and surroundings as to incur no hostility among men; if he is really earnest in doing the Divine will, the great enemy of our souls, with the various agents and agencies of his alliance, will make himself felt, whether in direct temptation to acts of deadly sin, or in the more artful and successful methods of suggestion and hindrance. For it is all one to him, whether a man loses his trust and dependence upon God by negligence and laxity, or by persisting in wilful sin. His end is to separate us from God. Presumption will do this for one man; despair for another; sloth for a third; and one cherished sin for a fourth. And his vigilance is unsleeping. "While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares."[1] In our mortal bodies, more-

[1] St. Matt. xiii. 25.

over, with their numberless appetites and cravings and their underlying tendencies to evil excess, we carry about an enemy against whom we must watch and pray, and keep it in subjection, that our bodies may not get the dominion over us. A man is often his own worst enemy. He can resist external foes. He cannot resist himself. Thus any one of us who is conscious of his life before God, who is making even a feeble effort after righteousness, can understand the words of the Psalms, "My soul hath long dwelt among them: that are enemies unto peace. I labour for peace; but when I speak unto them thereof they make them ready to battle."[1] "Mine enemies are daily in hand to swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O Thou Most High."[2] Since the warfare is thus real and present, we can enter into, and understand, those familiar words of inspired appeal, "Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me; fight against them that fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."[3] Nothing is more certain than our inability of ourselves to help ourselves in this great struggle. Who can efficiently guard against enemies who approach by all the avenues of thought and sense, who take advantage of our momentary carelessness or forgetfulness, who lie

[1] Ps. cxx. 5, 6. [2] *Ibid.* lvi. 2. [3] *Ibid.* xxxv. 1, 2, 3.

in wait to fill the vacant mind, and to occupy and abuse the idle hours? We may reason that we have no proof of the actual existence of evil spirits, none even of Satan himself, that we know of him only in the Bible and in Christian writings like our Catechism, in which we learn of "our spiritual enemy;" but once try to resist a besetting sin, to overcome a habit of impatience, the excessive fondness for good eating, the vanity which is the hidden cause of unreal speech and conduct, of jealous and unjust feelings and judgments, and you can hardly fail to become conscious of a something outside of you, warring against your conscience and better reason, who knows your weak points and unguarded moments, and seizes them, and turns your very good to evil, and poisons the fountain and source of your moral action. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[1] So exclaims our Apostle. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."[2] So in another place he reassures himself and us. As David: "When I cry unto Thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for *God is for me*."[3] If any one of us to-day is conscious of being "sore let and hindered in running the race which is set before him,"[4] and his past experience makes him distrustful of his good resolutions, or indeed of any will-power which he can

[1] Rom. vii. 24. [3] Ps. lvi. 9.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 57. [4] *Vide* Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent.

exert against the clinging habits, the pestering ever-recurring temptations, let him renounce, at once and for all, any strength of his own, and claim the gracious promise of this text — the certainty that, if he will hold on to God, He will fight for him, He will fight in him, He will say unto any of us, as to His holy Apostle, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."[1] Let us give up for ourselves, that we may be renewed and possessed by the Holy Spirit of God.

III. And once more. Suppose a man to be consciously on God's side in a world of sin and temptation, to have become more than a nominal subject of the Kingdom of our Lord, by the choice of his own will, and by some practical effort resulting therefrom. Suppose God's cause is made thereby his cause, and his work in a certain sense is God's work. Suppose him to be resisting the sin within him first, and then, so far as in him lies, the sin without him. He shudders at the profane, irreverent use of holy and sacred names. He is pained by the careless neglect to keep holy the Lord's Day, and the indifference of people at large to Divine worship. He is horror-struck by the over-spreadings of ungodliness, the common making light of evil, the odious talk and jesting of the riotous and impure. God's kingdom, that is, His Church throughout the world, is his home and nationality. It is a grief

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

to see the condition of so-called Christian lands, the divisions and disorders, the unbelief and the self-will, the poor lives and examples of those who are by name and profession the followers of Christ. Then outside of this nominal and divided Christianity, three-fourths of the human race Mohammedan, Buddhist, heathen, with scarcely more knowledge of their Saviour than if He had not taken our human nature, and lived and died for them. "O God, the heathen are come into Thine Inheritance!"[1] Suppose the true Christian heart to contract its horizon to the immediate sphere of one's own work, our work here, for example. Is it all for God? Are all working together for their own good and for His glory? Do the blessed fruits of His Gospel make a harvest time of our dull winter, and do the light and heat of His love warm our cold natures, and cast a summer glow over the dreary land? Does not all work thrive better than the highest work? Cannot error in all its varied forms command money and the popular voice, and what the world calls success? And how many of one's own friends and fellows are true workers for the Kingdom? How many here find it their meat to do His will that hath sent us and to finish His work?[2] And so the evil one uproots and destroys, and while men sleep sows his tares in the vineyard of the Lord. What is seen, and actually experienced, in our midst is so far from any great ideal, the true brother-

[1] Ps. lxxix. 1. [2] *Vide* St. John iv. 34.

hood in His Body is so far from being realized, the sweetness of holy living and daily self-sacrifice so seldom illustrated, that should we look on the earthly side of the picture, the Ark struggling on a dark, tempestuous sea, the hosts of Christ's Church militant scattered and disheartened, waging an unequal, divided conflict against the powers of darkness, one's own work so commonplace, so hampered and depressed, there would be no life left in one, neither hope nor courage to stand in one's place, much less "to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."[1] Now it is, in the face of these dispiriting circumstances, that the words of the text may uphold us. "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" Are we really on God's side? Is our work for Him? Are we fighting consciously, day by day, under the banner of the Cross? Then the work is not our work, nor is success as men account it, nor is any delay long in His reckoning to Whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. If we are on God's side, then God is for us. "If God be for us," as our own Apostle says, "who can be against us?"[2] What we have to do is to look out that we do not flag, lose heart, and come to do the work of the Lord deceitfully, that is, negligently, as though it were some selfish work of our own, or as though, since He is a God that hideth Himself, He is therefore asleep and His eyelids

[1] Judges v. 23. [2] Rom. viii. 31.

do not try the children of men.[1] Let us take the full and blessed comfort of these words to-day. The strength which upheld our great Apostle, which from the hour when, as on this day, he said with trembling accents, "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?"[2] enabled him to go on and do what the Master and Lord of us all appointed him, is our strength also. Oftentimes his flesh and his heart failed him. He was human like ourselves, filled with human shrinkings and compassed by human infirmities. But he learned to glory in the things which concerned those infirmities, in the answered prayers and the resistless grace which triumphed over them. Place yourselves to-day, all of you, young and old, by an act of your own will, by an act of believing love, in the Lord's safe keeping. You are His already by your Baptism, as members of His Holy Church here on earth, as grafted into the Body of Christ, and therefore heirs of salvation.

Make this real to yourselves. Say, "I am on the Lord's side. I *will* be on the Lord's side. He shall be the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Say this, meaning it, fully purposing to act up to it. And then be sure that He is for you; that He will keep you outwardly in your bodies, guard you against the thousand and one dangers from sickness and evil accident to which you are exposed; that, better than this, He will keep you inwardly in your souls, strength-

[1] *Cf.* Ps. x. 12 and xi. 5. [2] Acts ix. 6.

ening you to do your parts, to hate and flee from all evil, even the appearance of it, and to seek and follow after those things which are lovely and of good report. In those inward struggles and temptations, which only His Blessed Spirit on guard over your spirits knows, He will give you courage, and the free heart and the voice of prayer. When the voiceless agents of Satan assault and try to hurt and destroy your soul, He will interpose with the sacred antidotes, the remembered hymn or verse of Holy Scripture, the thought of a loving mother, or of some departed friend, the hope of victory after long struggle, and rest after toil, the form of Jesus, moving over the waters, or leading on through the wilderness, the echo of His voice saying, "It is I; be not afraid."[1] And as for our work here, as for His work and Kingdom all the world over, let us one and all, boys and masters, friends and fellow-helpers, let us make it His work. Let us think of it and speak of it, even in its small and irksome details, as to be faithfully taken up, persisted in, accomplished in His name, and for His sake, with cheerful patience and uncomplaining devotion, knowing that He is standing by us and looking on, and that what is His work must prosper in the end, just as what He wills will one day surely be accomplished, though "the heathen so furiously rage together: and the people imagine a vain thing."[2] It is a glorious thing to be on the Lord's side, on the side of all the good and just who

[1] St. Matt. xiv. 27. [2] Ps. ii. 1.

have ever lived, and whose souls are now in His safe keeping; to be on St. Paul's side, and one with the Apostles and Saints of all ages, and martyrs, with the innocent and gentle, and noble hearted, and true; to have the benefit of their availing prayers; so that we may humbly hope our own St. Paul is praying for us here, this very day; and, above all, to know that his and our Lord will stand by us this year and all our years, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel."[1]

[1] St. Luke ii. 32.

SERMON VII

THE HEAVENLY RACE

1 CORINTHIANS ix. 24.

"So run, that ye may obtain."

OBTAIN *what?* Run *where* and *how?*

These questions must be answered before we can make profitable use of the direction. The words are our own Apostle's, whose day this is. Of all the saints we keep the *Conversion* of St. Paul only, because that was the beginning of his true life, when he first started on the course, the prize and goal of which was no uncertain good, yet was not to be represented in the coinage or values of this world.

St. Paul's is the type of character best suited to us here. Great manliness, great tenderness, great steadfastness were wonderfully united in him — qualities admirable anywhere, indispensable, one may say, to the best results in a life like ours. "The one enduring interest of human life is character." How much is meant by manliness, for example, if we understand the meaning of the word! And true manliness is closely allied to tenderness, to the instinctive protection of the weak and helpless, of those who are set upon, teased, and

oppressed by the unfeeling. It carries with it a power of sympathy, and the will to make sacrifices for others as of course, without making account of them. May I ask you what is your own idea of being manly? Does it mean being loud, and rough, and self-asserting, and regardless of the rights and feelings of others, though qualified with some physical gifts of strength and activity? Is it consistent with rudeness to women or disrespect to parents and elders? The old poet struck the keynote of manly character:

> He never yet no vilanie ne sayde
> In all his lif, unto no manere wight.
> He was a veray parfit gentil knight.[1]

And steadfastness of purpose belongs to a true man. A fickle, vacillating person, the sport of circumstances, the waif of any chance current of influence, must lack manliness, must lack the solidity and force which a man should embody.

You cannot miss these traits in our own Apostle, in him who said, "This one thing I do";[2] "neither count I my life dear unto myself."[3] He, then, has told us in to-day's Epistle,[4] "So run that ye may obtain." And again I ask: Obtain what? That is the question.

I. Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right; and so a man — meaning all human beings who have arrived at years of

[1] Canterbury Tales: "The Prologue."
[2] Phil. iii. 13.
[3] Acts xx. 24.
[4] For Septuagesima.

discretion — a man is known by his desires; known, I mean, for what he really is. One's secret desires are the real test of his character. What habitually rises before him as desirable, which he wishes for daily and hourly, which, left to himself, he tries to get, which, whether obtained or not, he covets — that interprets the man; that is the mould in which his character is being formed. For how is "character proved and developed but by acts of choice"? To illustrate: Perhaps most persons, especially younger ones, have no clearly defined object before them, which they are consciously set to obtain. Suppose, notwithstanding, they are habitually looking out for personal ease and comfort, for indulgence of bodily appetites, for free bent to their animal spirits. This, then, is more or less their drift. This is what they are actually, if unconsciously, aiming at. Analyze to-day, my dear friends, older as well as younger, your feeling about returning here in this winter season, and taking up the round of duty, submitting to the restraints and discomforts, and surrendering the comparative freedom of home life. No fault need be found with the natural reluctance and shrinking from such transition, especially after the sweet intercourse and refining influences of a Christian home. But what may often cause this sort of aversion is worth a little self inquiry. Is it really love of the dear ones left at home, and the separation from them, which depresses us? Or is it

largely the home ease and indulgence, and the absence of restraint, which you miss? And can you find no purpose of duty to be performed, no promise to a parent, to reconcile you to the change, and supply motive, and arouse a manly determination? If any uncomfortable, discontented feelings you experience arise chiefly from the privation of such indulgences as you enjoy at home, then you have a clue to the bent of your desires; and your manliness may well be stirred, if not that higher principle which lights even the dull paths in which duty leads us as with a sunbeam.

The human heart is a mysterious, subtle thing. It is always deceiving and being deceived. And human desires are manifold, and exhibit strange contradictions.

Still, one who tries to know himself will get hold of some secrets, and if he is true to his conscience will be stirred up to master such drift of desire as he discovers in himself, and knows to be unworthy of his birthright as a Christian. Some desire to stand well with their fellows; the motive oftentimes is vanity. Others covet popularity from a simply selfish end, like the vulgar politician, to get something, to be made head of something, if only of some organization for games. And to be popular you must be careful not to have too high a standard. The best scholar in his class, the one most conscientious and earnest in his duty, is not always the most popular. Often he rouses against himself the feeling which the old Greek hero did, for whose exile

his fellow-citizen voted simply because he was tired of hearing him always called "The Just."[1] If a man is a clergyman, and wants to be popular in this day, he must not believe too much, he must hold his convictions lightly, he must deal much in compromise. He must be severe against unpopular vices, but cautious and vague in regard to those which are current around him. Many persons, not here, I trust (for youth ought to exempt one from the passion of avarice), but in the world around us, have a craving for riches, and this desire governs their lives. Some few of the more highly gifted have a great thirst for knowledge for its own sake, to search out the secrets of nature, to lay hold of the great principles which form the foundations of truth. And different desires cross and recross, ebb and flow, combine and separate, and make a man's inner life perplexing to himself and an enigma to his fellows, though meanwhile God sees that the inward current sets away from Himself, and therefore away from Heaven.

II. I return to my first question: "So run that ye may obtain." Obtain what? St. Paul answers in another Epistle. He tells us what his aim was, namely, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[2] "The high calling of God," not a

[1] Aristides. [2] Phil. iii. 13, 14.

special calling like that which made him an Apostle, but that which belongs to every Christian. "It is the calling of Christ from Heaven to join him there. Eternal happiness and glory in the presence of Christ is not a gift, but a prize; not a gift at the beginning of the course, but a prize at the end." The end glorifies the course. There is nothing beyond the understanding of the youngest of you in this. There is nothing to hinder a little boy as well as a gray-haired man from saying to himself: "My Heavenly Father calls me to work for Heaven, that is, for peace of mind and a good conscience and His blessing here, and a glorious hope, and a great reward, and the crown of everlasting life hereafter." We can all understand that. "So run that ye may obtain." Run where? Run how? The language belongs to the race course. St. Paul, no doubt, had stood apart, but keenly observant of the gaping multitudes that on the level shore of the Isthmus of Corinth gathered with intense delight and interest at the Isthmian games. The foot race, of all these, was the favourite game. He had seen the crowds wild with excitement as the weary runners neared the goal. One and another who had entered the lists dropped out, or fell faint and exhausted on the track. At the close, one steady determined athlete strains ahead, with force reserved, and features pulled and set. There is a momentary hush of breathless suspense, and then a loud burst of hoarse, incoherent

shouting. The goal is reached. He will get the wreath of pine. Many ran, but one only obtained the prize. We can fancy the Apostle musing on the scene, and contrasting this tremendous, disproportioned interest with the indifference about that other race, to which he was daily calling these poor Corinthian heathen, in which, if all would run, all would obtain. None need be distanced — a race not to the swift alone; but in which Ready-to-halt and Feeble-mind may hope to win along with the Apostle himself — a race, in which no fall or mishap causes rejoicing among the angel witnesses, no fellow runner gains thereby, and, what is more, in which no fall need be a failure, nor more than for a time hinder the onward strain. And yet, as being a race, it must be strenuous, it must take a great deal out of one. The Greek runners trained for ten months and thought of nothing else meanwhile. And this race of which St. Paul spoke is for a whole lifetime, and the training must go on, and there ought not to be any let-up to it. We cannot sit still and run it, nor run at random, anywhere and anyhow we please. A man might run, like Phidippides,[1] from Athens to Sparta, one hundred and fifty miles in forty-eight hours, and win no prize, for the course was one appointed; and so the Christian course is set us, and the man enters it in just one way. And grace is given according to God's rule and order, to-day, this Septuagesima Sunday,

[1] Herodotus vi. 105.

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in A. D. 1891, precisely as it was in St. Paul's day to men at Ephesus and Antioch and Corinth. Where, then, is the race run? Here, in this very place, amid these common scenes, in the cold gray light of these dull winter mornings, in schoolroom, and classroom, and wherever else we gather, alone, or with the noisy crowd around us. If we know our part and are doing it, we are running our race, from our first awaking in the morning to bedtime, in our bright hours and our heavy ones; and this thought, if present with us, will make any duty interesting and illuminate the dreariest landscapes with the reflection of Heaven's day. Think of it. Say in the morning, with the first spring of consciousness, "I am in the race for Heaven, duly entered if I have been baptized, entered again by my own deliberate choice, if I have been confirmed. Here is my first stage. Here, through this or that work and duty, lies my road to-day. Let me press on. Let me make a little headway to-day, if but one little step." For every duty faithfully performed, every prayer devoutly said, every act of patience and love for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, "little things on little wings," the withstanding small temptations, the turning a deaf ear to mean and low suggestions, the keeping in mind, hour by hour, the will, the watchful eye, the silent approval of God — these carry us on, these cheat the toil and cheer the way; these lessen the distance

between the end and this beginning, between the training and the running, and the palm-branch and the crown. Run how? The question is already answered. Take our own noble Apostle again into our counsels, and what is his reply: How? "Laying aside every weight."[1] Do not try to run with some heavy load of unrenounced and cherished sin. You cannot run in this race with the chain and ball attached of a bad purpose, of a miserable, shameworthy secret. You must disburden conscience. You must try for an undivided heart. Give up your evil way. Prayerlessness, irreverence, despising God's gracious helps — all these negatives of faith keep one out of the course altogether. If you honestly purpose to-day "to lay aside every weight," whatever the past has been, even the past six weeks, the Lord will help you do it, and "run with patience the race that is set before us."[2] *With patience.* There will be great need of patience. The will flags; the love of ease asserts itself; the habits of sloth and self-indulgence; the poor examples around one; the doubts, and sneers, suggested if not expressed; the weariness of stated duty.

"Always fast and vigil?
Always watch and prayer?"
Christian! answer boldly:
"While I breathe I pray!"[3]

Be dogged about it. Let there be no day in which a few hours' foolishness may undo the work of weeks.

[1] Heb. xii. 1. [2] *Ibid.* [3] St. Andrew of Crete, *tr.* J. M. Meale.

"Let patience have her perfect work."[1] In the heavy hours when Heaven's sunlight is deeply clouded, and the hopes and promises of the Gospel seem like distant echoes, and the heart loses all its spring, then let the indomitable purpose rule, and "endure, as seeing Him Who is invisible."[2]

III. "Looking unto Jesus";[3] for so St. Paul crowns his instruction as to how to run. And this indeed is the best and most helpful note of all. For our Lord trod this way before us, and He is Himself our Way, and in the Truth which He is, we learn our true course, and His Life He gives to be our life, that we may not walk in darkness but have the Light of Life.[4] It is as A Kempis says: "*Sine via, non itur*," "Road there is none other"; "*Sine veritate, non cognoscitur*," "no other illumination than His truth;" "*Sine vita, non vivitur*," "Life is a living death without Him."[5] Look now unto Jesus. Everyday this term. Does this seem a vague direction? Think as you can best of Him — as the Infant of Bethlehem, as the Boy of Nazareth, as the Man bruised and rejected for your sake, as being perfect goodness, and compassion, and gentleness, and yet perfect Almighty strength and Power — "the power of God unto salvation."[6] Look to Him in the little trials of your daily life here. He cares. Are you homesick? He was homeless.

[1] St. James i. 4. [2] Heb. xi. 27. [3] *Ibid.* xii. 2. [4] *Cf.* St. John viii. 12. [5] De Imitatione Christi: Lib. iii., Cap. lvi. i. [6] Rom. i. 16.

Are you beset by some haunting, degrading sin or by the though of it? He knows the stress of your temptation and the malice of your tempter, your self-betraying weakness, your discouraged, irresolute will. Look unto Jesus. He has every sort of help in readiness for you, and above all an exhaustless readiness to forgive. He led our Apostle through tribulations and distresses and struggles, of which we can form no conception. He ran the Heavenly Race, and won it, and Jesus was His Light and Guiding Star. And now his eyes rest upon that glorious countenance, and he prays his Master for St. Paul's School and St. Paul's men and boys to-day, that they too may reach the prize of their high calling,[1] and obtain the end of their Faith—even their souls' salvation.

[1] *Cf.* Phil. iii. 14.

SERMON VIII

THE PRODIGAL SON

St. Luke xv. 17.

"How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

"The way of transgressors is hard."[1] God's word says so; but so does all human experience. Not that vicious propensities bring immediate retribution. Not that for a time conscience may not lie drugged and dormant, that there may not be a period of excited animalism, of exuberant spirits, a sensation of giving a free course to appetites and passions, of having cast off restraint, of being one's own master, and owning no other lord. Not that there are no flowers, such as they are, in the gardens of sin. Not that the treasures of youth, and health, and money may not seem for a while quite inexhaustible, and other worldly advantages sufficient and sufficing. Only, that a day surely comes when the fires of the senses burn low, when the power of drawing pleasure from the gratification of desire departs, though the habit of seeking such pleasure is riveted. What is best in the man may be vulgarized

[1] Prov. xiii. 15.

and degraded beyond recognition, yet there will come an hour of awakening, an hour when the past life appears in its issues like a carcass in process of corruption, and reason and conscience and memory and the thought of what might have been, are like vultures preying upon the still-quivering vitals. In the current fiction of the day, we sometimes have the reassuring combination in a single hero of magnificent physical powers, and an unlimited capacity for deeds of daring and generous impulse along with habitual disregard of duty whether to God or man, a successful violation of God's commandments, and frequently as the end attained, a triumphant arrival in ports of peace and safe anchorage, the evil doings condoned, forgotten, or redressed by some one act, or *coup*, of splendid, showy self-sacrifice. It is safe to say that in most of these imaginary histories, the hero is a wild impossibility, the character wholly unlike any met with in common life, just as the events through which he marches to the *dénouement* are totally unlike such as meet us in natural sequence in our individual experience. Life is far more serious, more mysterious, and trying than any fiction can depict it; but it is greatly more commonplace and monotonous. What you call adventures enter into some lives more than into others; but in any case, the adventures are exceptional, and the matter of fact predominates. The necessities of nature are of daily recurrence. Eating and sleeping and mere living take up much of the time.

The prosaic everyday functions predominate, and tend to make most lives uniform. There is no harm in indulging the imagination with the adventures of unreal, impossible heroes, provided the standard of morals and duty is not equally unreal and impossible. But be sure that, however men conduct themselves in fiction or in real life, human actions are, and must be, subjected to a Divine scrutiny, which does not vary with circumstances. There is no world of living men where there is no God and no law of God, and no sure consequences of evil doing, such as even on this side of the grave anticipate that final judgment seat, before which every one of us alike will one day give account of the deeds done in his body. It is only in a very shallow, vulgar fiction that the wages of transgression are light, and its ways easy to retrace, and that without repentance. Life, your life and mine, is immeasurably more interesting than the most interesting of fictions. And no written romance is a tenth part as full of genuine romance and sentiment as the true, simple life of any human being. What we have to remember, nay, to engrave upon our inmost souls, is this — that there can be no sin without punishment; no sin, whether of omission or commission, without loss; and no undoing sin or making reparation without repentance; and no efficacious repentance without confession and amendment, and no forgiveness except for the Cross and Passion, through the merits and intercession of Jesus

Christ our Saviour. It is not necessary to argue that there are no pleasures which are full of sinful excitement, of which the beginnings, at least, are entertaining, and vivid, and with a sort of fascination. Make the most of it you can. Allow the utmost to what comes of the sweetness of stolen waters, and secret indulgences, acts of disobedience which have a spice of mischief and fun and daring in them, and slyness which is an art, and the ingenuity and contrivance which seems to mitigate the falsehood. Use a wise and sober judgment, not only in talking of youthful offences, but even in thinking of them, and still the unalterable fact remains, forming the woof and pattern of human experience, that sin always produces a harvest of sorrow, that it never pays, that the grayest homespun virtue is more desirable than the brightest colouring, the most picturesque investiture, the most captivating illusions of vice. Our Blessed Lord's wonderful, true insight into our nature holds in all time and place and with every style of man. Given the erring and straying from God's ways like lost sheep, the following the devices and desires of our own hearts, and the experience of the prodigal is sure to be ours, at least the first portion of it, the waste, the destitution, the desertion, the self-accusation, whether we attain his happy example of painful repentance and struggle and home-returns, or not. As soon as one comes to himself, whether after one wrong act, or a long course of sin, his earlier chances

will recur to him — the thought of what he was, and might have been — the comparative innocence of childhood days, and most likely, some thought of a mother's, a sister's, a father's love — of what might have been, had their dear advice been followed, had one listened to those tender prayers.

Look at the picture in the parable. It is drawn by the Everlasting Truth. It shows us how the imagination, the memory, the power of association are Divinely given to help us against our temptations; in the words of the Litany, "To strengthen us when we do stand, to raise us up when we fall, and finally to beat down Satan under our feet." The youth in the parable whom we all call the prodigal son, though he is not called that in the Gospel, has had a sorrowful experience. He has cast off restraint, the restraint of love and duty, of home and conscience — of law, social and Divine. To use a late phrase, he has wearied of the stagnation of comfort, the quiet order, the loving care of his father's house. Like so many, he has undervalued the sweetness of innocence, of lying down at night and rising in the morning in health of body and mind, with no black stain in the memory, no frenzied grip at some base indulgence, which has come to grief in the possession, just as an apple of painted glass would in the hands of a child. The hot blood surges through his veins, and cries out for freedom to have his own and do what he will with it. The daily round of prayer and blessing

is irksome. Any daily round is irksome. He chafes at his mother's gentle remonstrances and his father's firm refusals. He has taken the privileges of his childhood as of course, with no thought of gratitude to the Giver of all good things. The peace and plenty of his home, the innocent enjoyments, the sunshine of parental love, the opportunities for training in every good, useful, noble pursuit have no value in his eyes. He will have none of them. He tires of them all. Innocence is stupid. Goodness is life on a dull level. O for the wilderness and the sea! To try things for one's self, to pluck at will the poisonous wild flowers, to lose his way in the trackless desert, to stray into the portal and chambers of moral death! This is what A., B., and a great many more, are doing. And why not I? His short sight does not reach to the final stages, or his self-confidence imagines that he can hold back from that uttermost downfall. What he wants is life, without conscience, without duty, without God. This he fancies is to live like a man, with some dash and swing and sparkle in life, although he shatters a father's hopes and breaks his mother's heart. In the true history of the Gospel, the waste and riot and the infinite folly are traced to their end. A far-off land of desolation, a region of the shadow of death, desertion of summer friends, utter, abject want, the soul's famine, the body's starvation, complete degradation, only to be expressed by feeding on swine's food and the feeding of swine —

such is the issue of swinish standards of living and swinish pleasures. Is it not absolute bondage? Where is the fancied freedom? The emancipation from the bonds of duty to follow one's own will? Is it not the worst of slaveries? Then when the inevitable hour comes, and the fires of passion are spent, and the precious gifts of life exhausted, memory becomes an avenger. The thought of the past is an awful reproach. The early days, before vice had taken root, come back to him, when the morning land was fresh with the verdure and blossoms of spring, when the voice of parents was sweet in childish ears, and the chances of happiness and blessing, of noble, unselfish action, of life rising higher and higher to all things virtuous and lovely and of good report, still lay in the near distance, and ignorance of evil was indeed bliss. All this rises before the mind of the broken, remorseful, hopeless spendthrift. What might have been! That is the barbed arrow that rankles in the wound. While his choice was still in his hands, and the lovely helps of home, and the means and encouragements God devises to win us to His service were still his, how had he tossed them away! And now where am I? and what am I? Compare this and that. The swinish pleasures and the swinish companionship; the loathsome conversation, the beggarly end of it all; and there in the dear old home were cheerful gladness, and tender greetings, and plenteous food for mind and heart as well as body —

the Bread of Life was and is there! "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" Alas! In the majority of cases, the lost soul stops here. I must warn all of you younger ones who are before me that it is not safe to count on rising like the prodigal in our Blessed Lord's parable from the thought of what might have been to the hope of what yet may be. Vicious indulgence, sinning against light and knowledge, paralyzes the moral powers. The long disuse of prayer incapacitates one for praying. Reason and experience may enter their unanswerable protests, memory and association may call from the years long past, but the will may be hopelessly weakened. As I have seen again and again, the man may have no excuse to offer, he is miserable and knows it and owns it, but he dreads moral effort. When he tries to rise, his chains weigh more heavily; when he makes a step forward, they rattle, he loses heart; the Tempter is always close by to whisper, "It is of no use." And so in the fearful language of St. Peter: "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."[1] Very likely he may have already provided himself with a reason for inaction. He has no faith. He has taken up with some form of plausible error. He has discovered that the Scriptures are found unworthy of credence. There is no logical foundation

[1] 2 St. Pet. ii. 22.

for the Gospel history. It is full of legendary accretions. Therefore, there is no Saviour, no Precious Blood poured freely out to cleanse him from his sins, no intercession, and no Intercessor. Everything is uncertain and unprovable. If there is a God, He is too far away or too kind to mark my infirmities, or to hold me to account for them. It is all a chance or a fatality. I cannot help myself. And so, the day of grace passes, and the shadows lengthen, and that night comes on, in which there is no possibility of self-deceiving and no opportunity for repentance, though one sought for it carefully and with tears.[1] Many of us here may feel that this is an extreme case; that it does not apply to us; that we have not strayed far from the paths of righteousness; that still sweet in our ears sound the Church bells of our home; that we have not utterly broken with our childhood. But, if we are conscious that innocence of evil is no longer ours; if we know of some easily besetting sin; if we find our prayers, whether in public or private, tedious and unprofitable; if we are glad of an excuse to omit them; if we set little value on that Bread of Life which is broken on these earthly Altars for our souls' salvation; if our preparation for It is very slight, and our sense of need of It numbed and callous — then make sure we should contrast what might have been with what is, and before it is too late, while youth and time are ours

[1] *Cf.* Heb. xii. 17.

(or if not youth, still some measure of health and some little time), to think of what may be, of that full return of heart and soul and mind to himself, to which our Lord calls us. Think of those blessed privileges of his House to which we are so indifferent, of His merciful promise of welcome and forgiveness, if we come pleading our unworthiness and His all-sufficient Sacrifice.

> In my hand no price I bring,
> Simply to Thy Cross I cling.[1]

It is the extreme of folly to tamper with vice, to play with it, so to speak, that is, with the imagery of it, with the funny slang of it, with the coarseness and universality of it, as though that lessened the intensity of its evil, as though to prophesy smooth things about it, to make light, for instance, of drunkenness and obscenity, of the sins which God's word forbids, no matter how they are called, or cloaked, or depicted, can be anything but sheer ruin and misery in the end, lying down in darkness and shame and self-contempt, to awaken in the scorching light of His tribunal, to Whom all hearts are open. My dear friends and children, we all need the warnings. We are none of us in any danger of dreading sin too much. We are none of us in the land of security. We are still in a world of great temptation, and many of you have a hard struggle before you, if you are to hold fast and tread the narrow way. But if you will take it, the pillar of the cloud will shine

[1] "Rock of Ages," A. M. Toplady.

before you, on your footsteps, and in the distance the peace and plenty and welcome home of the Father's House will await you. You may now accept the blessings and prerogatives, not of hired servants, but of sons, if you will only try to fulfil the duties of sonship. How do you suppose the blessed Apostle St. Paul would address you, were he standing in my place to-day, out of his full experience and far-reaching wisdom, spanning earthly and heavenly mysteries, and with that longing for your salvation which filled his soul here on earth? Would it not be in words like these: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. . . . . I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen." [1]

[1] Rom. xvi. 17-20.

SERMON IX

ESAU'S TEARS

HEBREWS xii. 17.

"For he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

ESAU'S case seems a hard one. He simply chose a present gratification of an insignificant sort in preference to an unknown and indefinite future blessing, of which he had never considered the value. He rode and hunted and enjoyed his youth, and took things as they came, and had no long thoughts, and probably very few thoughts, except as to what he should do next, to pass away the time. It was the kind of existence which was entirely befitting his dog, if he had one, namely, to eat and sleep and run, and have an easy time. If an immortal being could get rid of his immortality by forgetting it and living like an animal; if a great inheritance of splendid duty, and far-reaching responsibility, and untold blessing to generations yet to come, could be lightly set aside, and bartered for a few mouthfuls of savoury food; if a lost year could be recovered and lived over and reckoned in again with the short years of life, then all would have been well with Esau. If a passionate burst of tears and

a sharp pang of regret, and a momentary glimpse of a wasted opportunity could have reclaimed his birthright, and brought back to him the high prerogatives of station and obligation so lightly cast away, the transaction of a summer evening on the moors of Beersheba would not stand as a beacon-warning to us, nor two thousand years after would a holy Apostle have recorded a repentance which was abortive because too late, which waved and beckoned and sobbed for a Blessing forever gone. We cannot offset Esau's tremendous folly by the prudent, not to say unbrotherly, conduct of him who bought the privileges and gained the honours because he valued them. We must not comment on Jacob's methods with self-righteous severity, for the plain reason that it is difficult for us to realize the facts of the history, to understand, for example, that what Jacob desired was in the far-off future which he was never in his lifetime to see, and that the only immediate fruits of his birthright were cares and sorrows innumerable, burdens of parental duty imperfectly fulfilled, and the life of a stranger and a pilgrim, with no fixed dwelling-place, and dying at last far away from his promised inheritance in a heathen land. The worldly and unbelieving now-a-days think they have made a plea for themselves when they discover shortcomings and inconsistencies in religious persons, and if one who is known as a Christian stumbles and falls, a sort of triumphant cry goes up as if something had been gained for the justification of

godlessness and reckless living thereby. Let us beware of unguarded words about the recorded mistakes and faults of God's saints of old. Far better is it to take our place in the pastoral train of the lowly Jacob than to ride in Esau's lordly cavalcade. Better lead a hard life now and behold the promises afar off, than have our portion in this life and with no hope beyond. Our Blessed Lord does not deceive us. He tells us of a narrow, rocky, upward path, of a strait gate, of a yoke and a burden, of resistance unto blood, striving against sin.[1] And somehow His words do not discourage or dismay us. Rather they brace and refresh us. They are like the strong, sharp, wholesome winds, which blow from the uplands, which we feel are better for us than the soft, hot, malarious airs of the valley. They call us to action and who would not prefer noble, honourable, inevitable warfare to inglorious, degraded peace? All that is really manly in us resents the thought of lying down at our ease, enslaved to poor habits and appetites, to our little pleasures and comforts, afraid of pain, incapable of moral, oftentimes of mental, effort, unmoved by great ideas and hopes, to whom there is nothing sacred, no divine reverence for things unseen, dead to the Heavenly Call, despising the Heavenly Inheritance, somewhat as if a person deprived of one of his senses, blind in the full light of the sun, should mock at mention of the morning glory, and refuse

[1] *Cf.* Heb. xii. 3 and 4.

to believe it because he cannot see. Such was Esau. And there are one or two practical lessons from his history which we should do well to lay to heart.

I. When you are tempted to evil, measure the gain or indulgence of whatever kind by the consequences which will follow upon your giving way to it. The Holy Scriptures are the mirror of our daily experience. Men sell their souls for nothing, forfeit trust, lose character, incur disgrace and present loss, to say nothing of the far worse results in the hardening of the heart and the toughening of all the moral sensibilities, with nothing to show for it. Like Esau, not only for a transitory and material price, but for the smallest, for one mess of meat, they sell their birthright. Think of what caused the fatal transgression of Eve. Balaam sold his birthright for a promise of promotion which he never lived to see fulfilled. Achan sold his for a garment he never wore. Ahab his for a vineyard, where not long after the dogs licked his blood. Judas his for thirty pieces of silver, and you know what he got for the money. The prodigal son in our Lord's parable sold his for riotous living which ended as riotous living always does end, in the husks of swine. And this holds in our daily life here as truly as in Scripture. For what price does one of you part with your sense of innocency, your self-respect, your consciousness of honourable dealing, of full and fair performance of duty, of trust-

worthiness? For what wages do you despise your birthright? What has made such an one hard and uninfluenced by holy reasonings and unmoved by conscience, so long as he is not found out by man? Cannot any one see how beggarly the satisfaction which costs so much? — which costs in the end the price of an immortal soul? What does the drunkard get for his beastliness, or the glutton, or the fornicator, to whose defiled imagination nothing is pure? Weigh well the price you are to pay. Count the cost. This is the proper use of the reason God has given you.

II. And again, Esau's history teaches us that sin is irreparable. Humanly speaking, you never can undo one sin. It is trite to call attention to this law in God's world of nature. Despise any of God's gifts, and He takes them from us. Who ever got back one wasted hour? And what comes of yielding, with the full consciousness of what you are doing, to wilful sin? You can never be as you were before. A lie leaves an indelible stain, like a crack on the surface of a fair mirror. One cherished impure thought may lead years after to the impure act, and that may leave the soul impenitent and unblest forever. Let us not be careless now, with the hope that we may make up for it by being careful afterwards. Be afraid of tolerating any known sin.

> It is the little rift within the lute
> That by and by will make the music mute.[1]

[1] Idylls of the King: "Merlin and Vivien."

Esau "found no place for repentance," "for ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected."[1]

III. Do not fancy that you can repent at will, that you can make amends when you choose, and return like the prodigal in the parable to your Father's house. The oft-trodden way gets hard at last. One may ask in Keble's words:

> And is there in God's world so drear a place
> Where the loud bitter cry is raised in vain?[2]

But we must reply with him. No tears will recall from her grave a mother whose heart has been broken by a son's neglect and waywardness. No remorse will restore the victim of the murderer to life. There are as many instances of a false repentance in Holy Scripture as of true. Esau repented. He sought the blessing; but, as St. Chrysostom says: "As many then as do not believe there is a hell, let them call these things to mind; as many as think to sin without being punished, let them take account of these things. Why did Esau not obtain pardon? Because he repented not as he ought."[3] David, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Peter, are examples of unfeigned repentance left on record that we, none of us, may despair. We here need not fear the want of the possibility of pardon. But what we need to fear is the possible want in ourselves of the will and capacity to

[1] Heb. xii. 17. [3] Hom xxxi. on Heb. xii. 17.
[2] The Christian Year: "The Second Sunday in Lent."

repent. It is a lesson of self-distrust and careful walking. "Be not," as the Apostle instructs us, "be not high-minded, but fear."[1]

To sum up what has been said: Count the cost. Look at the worthlessness of what the Tempter offers. Dread sin. Really there is nothing else to be afraid of. Distrust self. Trust in the Grace of God. Let us not forget that there is such a result as being too late in accepting the Loving Mercy of our God and Saviour. Just as the good chances and prizes of life are perpetually forfeited, because the opportunities and the times for securing them are neglected; just as, ten years hence, when you begin to share in the cares and work of older men, it will be too late to make good your deficiencies of education, or gather up the advantages which are now being frittered away; so in God's moral world one may arrive at a bleak frontier which he must cross, whether he will or no; where, in the waste land beyond, there is no more light of hope, nor possible recovery of the fallen. Do not think that we would ever say to any poor fellow-being: "Your moral condition is hopeless. You cannot repent. You cannot amend. You are shut out forever from the tender mercy of God." God forbid! But, dear friends, it behooves us, each for himself, to remember that there is a final step in the moral history of the soul, after which there is no return; that men do make shipwrecks of themselves

[1] Rom. xi. 20.

before they die; and that, not because God wills the death of a sinner, but because *they* will it and work it.

Let me turn to something of comfort and hope which we can set over against our weakness and readiness to yield even to base and miserable temptations. "As in His Manhood only our Lord died and rose again and then ascended to His glory, so in His Manhood only He met and mastered His temptation." "For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."[1] The fulness of His grace to unite us to His victorious Humanity is at the disposal and within the reach of any one of us, no matter how hard pressed by his spiritual enemy, or how encompassed and ensnared by besetting sin. He is ready to forgive us now and here, if we will but use the means of forgiveness. It is not our fancying ourselves forgiven and released from the burden of sins which will really help us. It is the declaration of His forgiving love conveyed to us, through the agencies, and by the agents of His appointment, which brings true peace and pardon. Seek in the days to come a true and hearty conversion. Trust only in His power and the greatness of His Name. Pray Him for the shield of faith. He has said: "According to your faith, be it unto you."[2] St. Paul tells us "the just shall live by faith."[3] And faith means a reliance on the mere

[1] Heb. ii. 18. [2] St. Matt. ix. 29. [3] Rom. i. 17.

word of the unseen God overpowering the temptations of sight. One thing there is no danger that we shall overestimate, and no possibility that we can overestimate, and that is the power and the willingness of our Lord Jesus Christ to help us.

SERMON X

THE LOVE OF CHRIST

EPHESIANS iii. 19.

"To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

REALLY to know a fellow mortal, to be admitted to his secret thoughts, to lay hold of the key which unlocks the man's true character, to be able thus to explain his outward conduct by his inner life of motive and will, is rarely granted to any of us. One only possesses that perfect knowledge of us, which we sometimes wish we had of one another. What would not the world give to know but imperfectly its greatest and best? What is Homer or Shakespeare to us more than a name? And when we rise from greatness like theirs, which is chiefly intellectual, to that greatness of virtue which makes men saints, how scanty are, usually, the records of their lives! Who knows or can tell us about Isaiah or Micah, or of St. James, the son of Zebedee, or of St. Jude and St. Simon? We have, indeed, from his own lips and pen, most wonderful and truthful confessions of St. Paul's experience, and can form some living idea of what manner of man he was; but what do we know of his friends and companions, of St. Mark or St. Timothy,

of Urbane his helper in Christ, or Stachys, his beloved?[1]

We may have been honoured with the friendship of one of whom the world was not worthy. Now that he is gone, we can call to mind how imperfectly we recognized his saintliness. The dust and turmoil of our earthly life, our very nearness to him, blinded our eyes to his real strength, so that while we were quick to discern his little weaknesses, and flattered ourselves, on that account, that we knew him well, we had in truth little knowledge of him. All can see a rent in the canvas or a fracture in the frame of a great painting, the merits of which not one in a thousand is able to appreciate. It comes to this: that we know little of one another, least of those who are best worth knowing. No wonder that our Blessed Lord exclaimed to His Apostle: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"[2] Suppose that some day, while looking over the papers of a departed friend, a father or a mother, or some one whose love to us was like theirs, we should light upon a writing faded by time and worn by use, and find it to be a prayer for ourselves, a secret outpouring of that soul to God on our behalf, the best wishes for us he could frame, what he thought we most needed, which God alone could give us. Would not that paper be a precious treasure to us, a touching memorial of a love that outlives death?

[1] Rom. xvi. 9. [2] St. John xiv. 9.

Would we not regard it as a kind of index of the special blessings we should ask and seek to obtain for ourselves? The Holy Ghost led the Apostle, in the passage from which the text is taken, to put down, while yet alive, what he asked God that his children in the Faith in heathen Ephesus might gain and hold fast; in order that, not those only to whom he wrote, but all Christians from that day to this, might understand what are the worthiest objects of desire, what the greatest blessings which the Holy One Himself could inspire an Apostle to implore in behalf of those whom he should never see again on earth, but longed to meet, by and by, in the Home of Christ's elect. Notice that the prayer embraces none of those earthly blessings for which we are allowed, nay, directed, to pray. He does not ask that the course of this world, the policy of the rulers of the Roman Empire, should be so ordered by God's governance that they might serve Him in all godly quietness. He does not pray that the imminent dangers in which they lived should be averted, that the mouths of the wild beasts with which he had fought at Ephesus should be stopped, or the rage of the wilder populace restrained.

In his prayer he rises above these scenes and storms of earth. His desires for them reach forth to the unseen and the eternal. He bows his knees to the Father of the great family who were knit together in the Faith of the Only-Begotten Son, not that they should be

free from trials and temptations, but have the strength to bear them; not that their labours should come prematurely to an end, and the heavenly morning dawn, but that they might have, established and rooted in their hearts, the mighty principle which can dispel monotony, freshen the dullest spirit, and infuse the zest of life into what should otherwise be a weary round of peril and toil. And furthermore, since the life upon which they had now entered was to lead them on to the "Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all,"[1] and therefore must be a progressive, ascending life, he prays that they "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," in other words, "to know the love of Christ, which," he says in a paradox, "passeth knowledge," that so they may "be filled with all the fulness of God,"[2] or, as he has expressed it in another place, till they might come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."[3]

This was St. Paul's prayer for those poor Christians whom the world of that day scorned and persecuted. Their great city of Ephesus is now a wretched village whose chief title to our interest arises from this Epistle to its Church, and its connection with the Apostolic history. Those to whom the Apostle wrote, who imbibed his holy lessons, came in various ways to their end. Some, in the arena, gored by bulls, torn by the

[1] Gal. iv. 26. [2] Eph. iii. 18 and 19. [3] *Ibid.* iv. 13.

claws and teeth of lions; some at the stake, seeing their own flesh shrivel and blacken before the scorching flames; some, in black dungeons which the sunlight never visited; some in obscure corners with the grace of the last Sacrament fresh in their souls. However it was, was of small account, for they had learned to know the love of Christ and that love was their light and food and joy. By it, they endured the cross and despised the shame. They knew Christ and were known of Him, and now they have won their inheritance, the crown and palm, and to "enter in through the gates into the city."[1] The keynote of the Epistle is contained in these words, "to know the love of Christ." That is all one with knowing the Gospel, the way of our salvation. Nay, more, to know the love of Christ is to know Christ Himself. It would seem that this is the great thing for a Christian to try for in this life. In this world the "knowledge of Thy truth" is what we pray for at the close of every service,[2] and Jesus Christ is the truth. And this brings us "in the world to come life everlasting." To get this knowledge, then, is our present work and study. As one advances, slowly and by steps, in this knowledge, it becomes more and more the secret of his strength, the substance of his hope, the motive of his endeavours.

There is a knowledge of the love of Christ which more or less we all have, which comes by hearing. We

[1] Rev. xxii. 14. [2] Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

learn it in our childhood. We here have heard, time and again, the blessed news that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."[1] We all know something of the Gospel history. Such familiar hymns as "Rock of Ages," "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say," "Weary of Earth," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," are a condensed and most touching application of that history. And this knowledge is an unspeakable blessing. There is a charm in the name of Jesus spoken in the ear of childhood. The very word Saviour draws our hearts. Multitudes say or sing words of which, if not now, yet before they die, they will realize the efficacy and power. And yet, this is not to know the love of Christ. By this knowing we do not know it, we only know of it. Here, as in our earthly knowledge, the distinction holds between the general, superficial knowledge of a thing and that which is thorough and intimate; between, e. g., the mere smattering of a science and its approximate mastery. A child begins the study of one of the ancient languages. For a long time he works like a journeyman mechanic, piecemeal, with small perception of the value of the study and a lively sense of the difficulty. Those only, who perfect their knowledge of the rudiments, are enabled at length to understand the relation of the parts to the whole, and then their thorough insight into the structure of one language becomes a key which fits the wards of

[1] *Cf.* "The Comfortable Words."

another. So in our knowledge of our fellow-men. There is indeed but One Who searches all hearts; but we know different persons in very different ways. We may have a general acquaintance with a great many people. Some few we know after a deeper, tenderer fashion. In knowing them we live as in an atmosphere. We know them so well that we can predict beforehand how they will look at a given subject, how far they will agree with us, and where they will probably differ. If we really love them and they are worthy of our love, our knowing them is our comfort and happiness, and the better we know, the more closely we are drawn to them, till the bare thought of ever being parted from them makes our hearts ache, and clouds our brightest day. Now from this knowledge, partial as it is, of those fellow-beings whom we love and who love us, God helps us to a first apprehension of what it means "to know the love of Christ." Let us beseech His Holy Spirit to give us a clearer idea of what this knowledge is, and then to teach us how we may acquire it.

I may say in plain words, that in order to know the love of Christ, we must first feel that we need it; second, must really desire it; third, must realize that we have it.

I. Now first, we must have a deep conviction that we need that love, the love of One, Who as man can understand us, and as God can relieve us. No mere words of man can bring anyone to see his true condition

in the sight of God. The harder one's conscience, the less sense he has of his sins. Yet every one of us has some perception, however blunted, of right and wrong. And which of us is so unfortunate as to feel at all times perfectly satisfied with himself and his way of living? Reviewing any portion of one's past life, who can feel that he might not have done better? What stains there are in the memory! How years have run to waste! What evil words we have spoken! How much of our work for eternity is still undone! What will God think of us, when the record of our lives is completed, and we stand before Him, without an excuse, with none there to back us of those who judge us so leniently here, but know so little of our real selves? Suppose to-night that one of us were to lie down in his present health and vigour, with no thought but to rise in the morning as usual, and to go on as heretofore, thinking greatly more of himself, his petty affairs and enjoyments, than of what God would have him to do. And suppose while the hours of the night stole by, under the still shining of the stars, the fearful messenger came at His bidding, and laid his icy hand on the warm springs of the body's life, and after some few convulsive pangs and sighs, the breath should pass out from the frame, the hands relax their tension, the head fall back on the pillow, and when the morning light streams through the window, and all around are in motion, he should still lie open-eyed, but seeing nothing, passive and speechless,

never more to be warmed by the beams of the sun or cheered by the brightness of his rising. Then, from these scenes and occupations, these familiar sounds and faces, from all which embodies our earthly existence, follow the undying soul going forth, alone, into that dark future beyond the grave, that land of shadows, seeing nothing which it has ever seen before, suddenly awakened to an irresistible conviction of the truth of God's Word, and of what is here taught you from it, which will cause an awful dread and self-condemnation in the best of us, in the sharp memory of misspent days and priceless, slighted privileges. Suppose, at this fearful moment, the lonely, affrighted soul, getting now its first real glimpse of the misery and consequences of sin, should hear a voice sweeter than an angel's harp, filling up the dismal void, and thrilling one through like sunlight, saying words like these: "Fear not, I have died for thee. Thou gavest thyself to Me long since. With all thy sins and infirmities, grieving Me so often and departing from My ways, still thy heart was Mine. Thy faith was in My Blood shedding. Thou didst come for refuge to My Altar, and obeying My dying command, didst in will lay thy sins down, and take My yoke upon thee. Therefore, I claim thee. I have borne thy sins. I have forgiven thy transgressions. I will clothe thee with My righteousness. Thou art no more a stranger in a strange land. 'The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the

everlasting arms.' "[1] What would such words be in that awful, desolate moment to the trembling soul? What would it be, on reaching forth in that darkness, to grow conscious that the Hand which was pierced for my sake was leading me, and that I might follow on, and fear no evil? From what that interposition would be to us then, try — though we must fail in trying — try to realize what it would be to be left without it, to have no friend and guide in that dire eternity, to know that the very love we had forfeited was like a millstone at the neck of a drowning man, weighing one down to the abyss of misery and despair. And now turn to the often-repeated assurance of God's Word, that the world and all that is in it cannot do for us what that love of Christ can; that even here, with troops of friends and all that money can buy, a man is poverty-stricken without it; that this alone can give root and stability to one's life, or make of our earthly labours anything better than a bubble and dream. This is the first step in learning to know the love of Christ, to realize how much we need it, that it is so indispensable, that bread, and water, and the light of the sun, the absolute necessities of our body's life, are the figures most commonly employed in Holy Scripture to represent it. Have we gotten so far in this knowledge that as a man, in some distressing disease, feels his need of a skilled physician, so we know and feel this much — that the

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 27.

love of Christ is the only medicine which can save our souls?

II. If so, the second step is at hand. We shall begin to desire that of which we sorely feel the need. Is there a way by which our great need may be supplied? When the poor people in Galilee heard of Christ's presence among them, they hurried with their sick and maimed and blind to the spot where He was. They did not wait till He came from the desert places into the immediate neighbourhood of their homes. They did not stop to take bread for the way. They felt that, if they once got access to Him, He would supply all their wants, that food and shelter and healing were all to be found in that presence. They seem never to have doubted His kindness, and their experience proved that they were right. He said Come, and they came. As now, if there be anywhere a soul weary of sin and of the world, that soul He invites to come to Him, only now, without moving from its place. For the love which we so need comes seeking us. Do our hearts' desires go forth to meet it? "He that cometh must come believing in Christ, as the giver of the true Bread," the Bread which not only sustains, but creates life, and "he that believeth must believe with a belief which makes him come to Christ, in prayer and in the means of grace." If we truly desire "to know the Love of Christ," we shall draw near to Him in the ways which He has appointed.

III. and lastly. In that case a most precious revelation is not distant. While we timidly trace His footsteps, and seek to please Him in giving up our own will and doing His, it comes in upon us, like a great tide, and most likely when we are resisting some temptation, or struggling to fulfil some neglected duty, and feel discouraged and self-condemned, that all this while we have never been out of His sight, that before we ever thought of loving Him He loved us, and that when we have wandered far away from Him, as the sheep stray from their shepherd on the mountains, He has followed after. When we first felt our need of Him, it was His love which brought us to it, and that alone kindled in us the desire to serve Him. If He had not led us to see that we "worthily deserve to be punished" "for our evil deeds," we should never have come heartily to pray for "the comfort of His Grace."[1] Wonderful love of Christ! Which passeth knowledge! All the way through, though we have never once deserved it, though we have forfeited it a hundred thousand times over, it has never failed us. Christ has loved us all along, loves us now, will love us, when the earth is heaped heavily upon these bodies, and our souls have no other help to look to, no other arm to lean upon but His.

[1] *Vide* Collect for the fourth Sunday in Lent.

SERMON XI

TRUE IMMORTALITY

St. John viii. 51.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death."

There is a natural longing in all men for immortality. We feel in our own spirits the power, that is, the capacity of an endless life. The living soul, which man received from God, repudiates the thought of death. It is an instinct to perpetuate even this passing earthly life, to leave behind us some memorial of our sojourn here. All the great achievements of men, the pyramids and other vast material structures, the works of human intellect, the sects, societies, and foundations of various kinds, have been due, in a greater or less degree, to this motive — the craving to leave "Footprints on the sands of time,"[1] something which shall endure, and in which their authors may live among posterity. The least ambitious, if he retains in his spirit the impress of his Creator, would not care to live here, if it could be proved to him that he was not to live hereafter. We bear about a form of physical life which is far more delicately organized, and exposed to the ravages of

[1] Longfellow's "Psalm of Life."

disease, than that of the lower animals. Many of us, while still alive, have, in ourselves, in certain bodily weaknesses and defects, the monitions of decay and death. But in the very hour of dissolution the soul's life is unimpaired. There is no decrease of its activity. It has a life of its own, apart from the body which it inhabits. It is a prophecy to itself of an unending existence. Our Divine Lord said these great words of the text, standing in a court of perhaps the most glorious building the world has ever seen, of which He knew that in a few years not one stone should be left upon another. Himself invested in a humanity, in which He was to taste death for every man, He spoke to mortal men, every one of whom was to die, and some, no doubt, by modes of death most lingering and painful. He recognized in the most vigorous form before Him the vesture of decay. He was aware of the literal interpretation, which many of His hearers would give His words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death." Man's observation brought him to the great fact expressed in our Burial service: "In the midst of life, we are in death."[1] But the Son of Man reverses it. "In the midst of death, we are in life," or, rather, we may be, "if we keep His saying." And again, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die."[2] He sets His seal on our natural longings for immortality — immortality for

[1] Notker, monk of St. Gall, ninth century. [2] St. John xi. 26.

ourselves and our works. He tells us how even these latter may become immortal. Nothing really endures but work for God. In the words which formed the text of the first sermon ever preached in this Chapel, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."[1] What is built thereon, is built for eternity. Though the outward form and mould may perish, God's work endures. Those who have loved and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ here, in whose heart are Thy ways, in whom the Divine Life once implanted has been preserved and cherished, until their life has become no longer theirs, but His, shall never see death. No work based on that foundation can fail to abide. Though all vestige and memory of it pass away among men, it lives in far-reaching results; it lives in the record and memory of God. To-day, as you all know, is the twenty-fifth anniversary of this School.[2] A quarter of a century ago we came here with little forecast of what the years should bring. The work had been already planned by a large and liberal heart, and consecrated with a single eye *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. It was then begun — a small beginning; but with a great and noble end in view; and with no selfish by-end of personal interest or reputation. The day is an occasion, therefore, not to be lightly passed over. Like the prophet of old, we should set up our landmark, and call the name of it "Ebenezer,"

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 11. [2] St. Paul's School was first opened on April 3, 1856.

saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."[1] Those who had part in founding and starting this school, had from the beginning a very clear idea that the education to be aimed at should comprehend the "training, exercising, unfolding, and perfecting all the faculties, moral, spiritual, even bodily, as well as intellectual." It was felt that the communicating certain sorts of knowledge, useful, under certain narrow and transient circumstances, to the mind, was but a narrow and petty aim in comparison. While it was acknowledged to be our duty to give the best attainable instruction in so-called useful knowledge, we did not consider that the most successful teaching of algebra or history or the languages,was an adequate substitute for the knowledge and love of the One Perfect Moral Being — Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Of course, Arnold's distinction between Christian instruction and Christian education was not forgotten. As he says: "Elementary religious instruction may be certainly given to all who have their common natural faculties, that is, the Catechism and Scriptures and hymns may be learned by heart, and the great truths of Christ's Gospel may be taught so as to be known and remembered. There is no doubt that a school may compass as much as this, and this is by no means to be despised. Although we know but too well that the learning this and much more than this is very far from saving the soul, yet it is no less

[1] 1 Sam. vii. 12.

true that without this we are much worse off, and with this, much better off. It is at least giving a man a map of the road which he is going, which will keep him in the right way if he uses it. But to give a man a Christian education is to make him love God as well as know Him, to make him have faith in Christ as well as to have been taught the facts that He died for our sins and rose again. Mere lessons will not do this. But the lessons reinforced by the example and tone of masters and caretakers will be the first step, will contribute to carry on the work begun by pious parents in Christian homes, will be at least that planting and watering, to which in many cases, and in spite of evil and counteracting influences, we may believe and hope that God will give the increase." It was our conviction, then, as now, after years of experience and trial, that the higher the moral and spiritual tone of the place, the fuller and more thorough will be the intellectual development; that the religious instinct, so far from enfeebling and relaxing the general teaching and mental discipline, only strengthens and vitalizes them, presents an unfailing motive for strenuous exertion, and blesses the whole work with that illumination which, along with every other good and perfect gift, comes down from above.[1]

It was a small beginning which we made on the third of April, 1856; but all things, large or small, must have a beginning. And there were true and good aspirations,

[1] *Cf.* St. James i. 17.

purposes, and prayers. It was decided at the outset that the School should never be advertised, or set forth in any of the customary ways; that no publicity should be sought; no circulars with attractive promises, however sincere, sent out; no effort made to obtain scholars beyond the daily effort to have the work well done. The resolution has been rigidly adhered to. Whatever has come of the work has come without seeking notoriety or soliciting public favour through the press. The beginnings were small; the growth was gradual. We made one family, we felt like one family. We began at once the form of morning and evening prayers which we use now. Within the first few weeks we established the custom of the Sunday evening hymn,[1] followed by the Lord's Prayer and blessing, and saying good night as members of one household. So too the singing on Saturday evenings the hymn, "Great God, to Thee my evening song."[2] How many weeks here have closed with the words, "My days unclouded as they pass," "Seal my forgiveness in the Blood of Christ, My Lord"! So, when we first broke up for autumn holidays, we sang together, on the last night, to the same tune, the hymn which we always sing now, and which for the fiftieth time we shall sing, if God please, in June, "Saviour, source of every blessing."[3] The idea was then, as now, to begin and end the days and weeks and terms

[1] "Now the day is past and gone,
Holy God, we bow to Thee."

[2] A. Steele.

[3] P. Robinson.

of school work *In nomine Jesu*, under the blessing and protection of the Almighty. We were greatly favoured during our first ten years in the loyal enthusiasm the boys felt for the School, which aided immensely in suppressing the worst forms of evil, and in the health which we all enjoyed. During that time we had scarcely one serious illness and no death. Then, as ever since, the School was blessed with faithful and efficient masters. One I ought to mention, whom, after the absence and lingering illness of a year, God called to Himself, Mr. John T. Wheeler, whose devotion to his work, and eager scholarship, and pure and blameless character were most helpful to us, and must never be forgotten here. The chief event of those earlier years was the completion and consecration of this Chapel. The corner-stone was laid upon St. Peter's Day, June 29, 1857, and the consecration took place upon St. Paul's Day, January 25, 1858. From that day this Chapel has been the centre and heart of all our work, and must continue to be, in proportion as that work is true and good, and worthy to endure. From what has gone on during past years in this House of Prayer springs all that is, or has been acceptable here, whether to God or man. For here we approach the Fountain-spring of motive. Here we obtain that cleansed, invigorated will, which stirs one up to keep the sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ in his daily life, whether he succeeds or fails. What blessed and holy scenes this

place has witnessed! How many infants and adults have been here admitted to the Kingdom of God in Holy Baptism! How many have renewed their Baptismal vows in confirmation, kneeling in this aisle before this Altar! How many times have we, and others whose faces we shall see no more on earth, met here the Lord and Lover of our souls in the Communion of His Body and Blood, and drawn from Him power and patience to go forward, strength against our temptations, and comfort and support in our troubles and despairs! What lovely services we have had here in these days gone by! What hymns of praise, and heavenly longings! What blessed words of instruction from the lips of some of the best and holiest, several of whom have passed beyond the veil, and, having kept the sayings of our Lord and taught men so, shall live with Him forever! How many years of daily morning prayers have followed one another! How many good resolutions have here been formed by younger and older worshippers, some of which, thank God, have been kept, and brought forth fruit unto life eternal! In how many hearts have seeds of grace been planted which the Blessed Sower has not allowed to die! We cannot overestimate the immeasurable importance to our work of the guiding, helping Grace of God. Even in an intellectual aspect, no habit can so conduce to a clear and even and sound mind as the habit of prayer. All lofty and great thoughts come naturally to one who leads a

life of prayer. And who does not know that, if you cleanse the springs of moral action, you strengthen and enlarge the whole man? If the moral nature is dwarfed and tainted, you impair the mental processes. It is as the true Wisdom has it: "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness."[1] The life of a place like this is of no account, unless pervaded and hallowed by a reverent and an abiding fear of God. When the fear of God has ceased to actuate the masters and the scholars here, when it has become a name only instead of a living, controlling principle, the place itself will die, and it will deserve to die. For whatever else may hold its sceptre, conscience will then have abdicated, and the studies and daily routine of every sort will become an eye-service, shaped and addressed to the favour of man without reference to the presence and judgment of Almighty God. What we now have of deep and true religious principle is the salt of our existence; what we have not is the cause of our deterioration, and the germ and menace of our decay. That is why you are so often urged to form and keep up habits of daily, private prayer, at least when you rise in the morning and before you lie down at night. For this reason we persist in enforcing the duty of united praise and supplication, longing for the day to come, when not one voice among us will be mute, nor a single heart indifferent to God's holy worship; when every Creed

[1] St. Matt. vi. 23.

will be an act of faith on the part of the whole congregation, and we shall go out from every service, however familiar and accustomed, awed and refreshed, as having realized the Presence and sought the blessing of God. Standing here, after the passage of a quarter of a century, with a full recognition of manifold mistakes, failures, and shortcomings in the past, and a most tender and sensitive appreciation of all the help and kindness and loyal interest on the part of fellow-workers and boys who have made themselves such, which have blessed these years and softened their trials and assuaged their cares; feeling also that the permanence of the School is not yet assured, and that the difficulties and cares to be daily met and surmounted form, year by year, a heavier load, demanding courage and strength of a higher quality than earth can bestow to bear them — I cannot but cast the mind's eye forward, say, another quarter of a century, and think what will be the condition of things in this place then, when this present community who are working together now will be scattered and new forms fill our seats, and the old order will have given place to a new. Will the work still live? Will the worship of this Sanctuary be still kept up? Will our faith and obedience have been so approved as to win the fufilment of our Lord's promise, "If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death?" Or shall we merit ultimate failure? When we have gone the way of all the earth, shall our works not live

after us, because not built upon the One Foundation? God forbid! May our wishes to-day strengthen into hopes! And may the hopes, with which we look humbly forward, turn, more and more, to prayers — such prayers as shall reach Heaven's gates, and, for the sake of the one prevailing Intercession, find acceptance and an answer! Let us say that the School will still live on, a life of its own, not assimilated with, or antagonistic to, any other institution of sound learning in the land, with its own peculiar features and traditions worthy to be transmitted unimpaired, a school where twice the present number of boys shall be cared for, and taught, and known better than you are now; where the greater wealth and social progress of the times shall have provided abundantly those appliances of comfortable lodging, accommodation for older masters, scientific apparatus and study, rooms for libraries and collections, which we at present lack, along with such larger and adequate endowment that the School shall be in truth Alma Mater, a patron and not patronized, and so have freedom and scope for noble advance in scholastic training, and for controlling and elevating its own internal life. I imagine all that has been good and manly and true and loyal in past years (and I rejoice to think how much), still living in increasing power for wholesome influence in those happy days to come, when her sons shall rise up and protect the name and interests of St. Paul's, first and most chiefly, by

putting down among themselves all impurity of word or deed, all baseness of untruth and unfair dealing, all mean combination against authority and wise restriction, and all profane, irreverent ways of speech and action. I picture to myself the manly exercises of the hours of play, the increased physical development, the utter discouragement to all effeminate, soft, and slothful ways of thinking and of living; the older sympathizing with the younger, and standing up for them so faithfully and diligently that no young boy shall be able to say that he learned evil here, and that many an older one shall confess that here he has unlearned it. In my prophetic thought, I enter with the great body of this School into a new and larger Chapel, a collegiate Church, where six or seven hundred shall have ample room to worship. This holy place shall then form an Ante-Chapel, with its old ornaments and sacred things intact, still reverently preserved and used; but the great throng pass silently through this into a more glorious House of prayer, such as form the pride and benediction of the ancient schools and colleges of the mother country. I see and follow the long procession of the surpliced choir, the glory and the reverence of the altar worship, young heads bowed in unfeigned adoration, and the combined multitudinous response arising to the Lord of hosts as from a golden censer. I raise my eyes to the high-arched roof, to the strong walls, and pictured windows, until they rest at

last upon the Altar end, and the beauty of the Sanctuary, which centres there. And in the midst He stands Who once blessed the children, and the smile of Heaven is on His holy Countenance, and His Hands that were pierced are uplifted, and I know that He is interceding for them and blessing them still. And I trust and believe that wherever those shall be who have founded this School and carried it on during these past twenty-five years (if so be His merciful will and pleasure at rest under the feet of His elect), they will still know that the Redeemer's work is going forward here, and that here He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.[1] If we but keep His saying, if we hold fast His Faith, and live in its obedience, neither we nor our works shall die. "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us: for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us."[2] For us, and what Thou hast done for us, answer our prayers to-day. Calm our anxieties, increase our faith, confirm our hopes, and, as Thou didst to Thy chosen of old, say of this place also, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."[3]

[1] *Cf.* Is. liii. 11. [2] *Ibid.* xxvi. 12. [3] *Ibid.* xxvii. 3.

SERMON XII

THE STANDARD OF PERFECT MORAL BEAUTY

Isaiah liii. 2.

"When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

Zechariah ix. 17.

"How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!"

The two prophets are speaking of the same Person. The word beauty has many meanings, as there are manifold degrees in the capacity for discerning it. The most perfect beauty in nature and in art is hidden from the great mass of mankind. Multitudes pronounce things or persons beautiful which have none of that Heavenborn light around, or within them, which justifies the word. There must be somewhere in one's self an inward sense, which corresponds to the external impression. The mere physical limitations are great. The range and keenness of eyesight are various. The most glorious sunset is lost upon the blind. Tell me what a person's daily life is, how he occupies his thoughts and time, and I can very nearly guess what is likely to be his estimate of some noble poem, or picture, or cathedral — if he admires at all, how and what he

admires, and how far he enters into the inner thought, that is, the inspiration, of the work before him. Each one of us sees what we see. And that depends upon what there is in us taken singly. The external world does not suffice. Some of the most degraded people in the world live in the valleys and on the mountain slopes of Nature's choicest manisfestations. Seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not. All goes to prove that the perceptive faculties vary infinitely in persons, and that a receptive faculty also is needed, if one is to take in the true meaning of the world around him, even the glories of earth, and sea, and sky. Of what use is education, unless it trains and refines these faculties? In what respects does the so-called educated man differ from the most uneducated, if he really sees no more with the inward eye than the other? Do you wish to know where you rank in the scale of being? How near or how far from that likeness, in and for which you were created? Ask yourself, "What gives me most pleasure? What kind of enjoyment is most congenial and desirable to me?" If you answer truly, you may be humbled, perhaps, but you will gain in that knowledge of self without which there can be no true improvement in mind or manners.

The perfection of beauty is moral beauty. To appreciate that, one must have in himself desires and inclinations for it. The flower of all the beauty of the world, the crowning glory of our human nature, was

our Incarnate Lord and Saviour. The glow of Heaven was on His brow, in Bethlehem, and Nazareth and Jerusalem, just as the truth of Heaven was in His life. "Very God of very God."[1] He took our nature into His Godhead, and, as He walked the highways of our common life, the stars were the dust of His feet. He became one of us; in words of prophecy," His delight was with the sons of men."[2] He shared our infirmities. He was a helpless infant like one of us, and a little child hungering and thirsting and shuddering with the chill of the night, and withered by the heat of the noonday. He was a youth among youths, in that home of Nazareth, tenderly subservient to His Blessed Maiden Mother, helping and toiling and loving and cheering St. Joseph; and the carpenter's shop became the Holy of Holies, and the poor rude cottage shone with a light unspeakable and full of glory. He went forth to His mission of "Love Divine, all love excelling."[3] The water of the Jordan was poured on His Head as though He needed to be cleansed from sin. The shadows of the wilderness deepened around Him, as that dark presence drew nigh, to destroy whom and the works of whom He had come. You notice that the tempter has no power to discern the King Immortal. He can only try his futile experiments, apply his tests, bring up his triple battery of assault, so effective against mankind in general, and go away baffled and bewildered

[1] Nicene Creed. [2] Prov. viii. 31. [3] Charles Wesley.

to wait for another predestined hour, the "hour and the power of darkness."[1] The Holy One comes forth from the desert, triumphant over Satan, refreshed by the ministrations of angels. He goes about among the fishermen and peasants of Galilee, through the populous villages, in the market-places, the synagogues, by the shores of the sea, over the hills and mountain sides, wherever men are, with their dreadful distress and sin and ignorance and incapacity and unwillingness to see and own the beauty of Heaven come down to enlighten their darkness, to cleanse and transfigure their sordid riches and their desolate unrelieved poverty. "He came unto His own."[2] Contrast the account of our Lord's Person and mission in the Epistle for this Passion Sunday with the reception of that Person and mission by the Jews as represented in the Gospel. "Art thou greater than our Father Abraham?"[3] is their indignant cry. "Compare thyself with Abraham! Monstrous! Incredible!" Think of our Lord's calm statement in reply, as if He had said: "There is no comparison between the creature and the Creator. Abraham bows low before My feet; 'your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad.'[4] He was blessed to look forward to this day of grace, to know that, when I came in the flesh, I should come of his family, and take upon Me his

[1] St. Luke xxii. 53.
[2] St. John, i. 11.
[3] *Ibid.* viii. 53.
[4] *Ibid.* 56.

nature. Even in his lifetime I drew near to him, and in various ways revealed Myself to his faithful heart. He saw My day, therefore, breaking over the far-off hills, and he will see it in its mellow noon, and at the end of time." Mark the contemptuous incredulity of the Jews at this announcement: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?"[1] Our Lord was then thirty-three years old, but worn with toil and suffering, so that he looked nearly twenty years older. They spoke to Him and of Him as if He was a mere man, one like themselves; only making an arrogant, absurd claim, speaking enigmas, not to be tolerated a moment. Consider the stupendous assertion with which He closed this contradiction of sinners against Himself. How quietly He says it, as though the earth on which He stood, and the air around Him were full of witnesses to the truth of it: "Before Abraham was, I am."[2] As in the words of their great Solomon, speaking of the Incarnate Wisdom: "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."[3] "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."[4] Before ever the earth and the world were made, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[5] How did they receive this glorious, gracious revelation of Himself? "Then took they up stones to cast at

[1] St. John viii. 57. [2] *Ibid.* 58. [3] Prov. viii. 23.
[4] Job. xxxviii. 7. [5] St. John i. 1.

Him."[1] It is a signal illustration of what I have just said. We see according to the clearness and simplicity and responsiveness of the inward vision. No wonder in the ancient hymn men prayed, "*Accende Lumen sensibus*" — "Thy Light to every sense impart."[2] For "in Thy Light only shall we see Light."[3] Take this Passion Sunday. Take an average congregation. What immense, incalculable differences between one and another's relations to the Cross and Passion of our Lord and only Saviour! In one way we are all alike, and all mankind are alike. From Abraham, nay, from Adam to the babe just born, all need to be washed and cleansed in His Atoning Blood. All need to plead the merits of His One True, Pure, Immortal Sacrifice. But the universal need is one thing, and the voice of the individual human heart is another. How does the world at large to-day regard Him, its only Mediator and Redeemer? (And the world means the world's inhabitants, people who have unconscious longings for the supernatural and divine in their personal lives, longings which often they endeavour to satisfy by imaginary, senseless dealings with the world of spirits, by so-called Christian Scientism, by monstrous perversions of the Gospel promises to faith, by endless devices of Satan to prevent men from simply, humbly, obediently accepting the way of Salvation, and the means of

[1] St. John viii. 59.
[2] Tenth century, translated by E. Caswall.
[3] Ps. xxxvi. 9.

grace, and the offer and the opportunity to become children of God and partakers of the Divine Nature.) Yet here among us, veiled, indeed, but radiant with immortal beauty, is the Presence of Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God. What does the world see in Him, in His cause, in His Church and visible kingdom? He is still identified with "the poor in spirit"[1] and "the lowly in heart."[2] He has little part in the fashions and artificial graces and ostentations of men. His saints, and that means those who really bear His Cross, and the business of whose lives it is to serve and worship Him, are seldom finely and delicately clad, never live delicately, are never popular idols, are not praised in the daily papers. Their beauty is not a beauty of flesh and blood, of physical colours and proportions; it is a hidden beauty, a beauty, though at a great distance, something like His, Who, as Isaiah tells us, "hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."[3] To whatever station His own belong, they count nothing of it, only they had rather be of low station than high in men's esteem. Living, to them, means duty and sacrifice, giving up what the world covets, despising what the world approves, drawing their cross, that is, the cross He lays upon them, cheerfully to their very hearts, scorning mere ease and comfort and gratification of appetites, finding the desert air and fare

[1] St. Matt. v. 3. [2] *Ibid.* xi. 29 [3] Is. liii. 2.

more bracing than luxurious indulgence, not affrighted at a little transitory pain, nor disturbed by a passing sneer, nor by premeditated or unconscious neglect. The sort of King they bow to is different from the loftiest potentate of earth, and the Crown He holds out is far and away a lovelier object than one of gold and jewels. What does the world practically think of all this? How does it regard the wisdom, the ends and the rewards of His Kingdom? What do you, each of you, really think of His blessings? "Blessed are the pure in heart," for example, "for they shall see God."[1] And those who stay impure never will see Him. They will never discern His beauty in this life, and surely they will never behold Him in His beauty in the endless life hereafter. How does the music of the Gospel sound in your ears this morning? "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."[2] Now, the answer to all this is plain enough. None here are so dull, or imbecile and foolish, that they cannot understand what it means, that the nobler call is that which comes from the Cross; and that the high and great choice leads along the narrow and rugged way; and that a lonely following of the Thorn-Crowned and Crucified is lovelier by far than the gayest life with its bitter end with Satan and his legions; and that humility, and self-renunciation, and patient endurance, and spiritual courage are poorly represented by senti-

[1] St. Matt. v. 8. [2] Gal. vi. 14.

mental gush and sceptical doubts, and a Bible dissected, though neglected, and a phantom Buddha set up, like the Giant of the Brocken, in place of Him Who was incarnate and died and rose and ascended to be the Light of human life and the Saviour of souls. How different His rewards to those the mass of men are struggling after! His are lasting, satisfying, ennobling, enlightening. Oh "how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!"

> Holy, Holy, Holy, though the darkness hide Thee,
> Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see.[1]

I am forcibly reminded to-day of our first beginnings in this place, thirty-six years ago;[2] and I venture for a moment to uplift the veil, which ought to conceal feelings and memories and aspirations too sacred and deep to expose to common view, too much a part of one's self to claim or expect much sympathy. The place was taken possession of at the very outset "*In Nomine Jesu*," not for man, to aggrandize or honour man, nor to perpetuate any man's name or idiosyncrasies. He who first thought of founding the School is of higher mould than that.[3] He is not one of those who "think that their houses shall continue forever; and that their dwelling-places shall endure from one generation to another; and call the lands after their own names."[4] It is the simple truth to say that the work was begun for

[1] Bishop R. Heber.
[2] April 3, 1856.
[3] The late Dr. G. C. Shattuck.
[4] Ps. xlix. 11.

the honour and glory of God; that the thought in the hearts of those who have been here longest and have had most to do with its details has been that the foundation laid should be more imperishable than any human science can construct; that nothing should be done merely to carry out individual theories of education or to win favour from men; that the Ancient Faith of Christendom in all its fulness should here be taught, defended, believed, and lived, and that all that men call beauty in literature and art and science and morals should be measured and valued by that standard of perfect moral beauty set before us in the holy Gospels; that here the rules of Christ's Church should govern and be observed rather than any self-invented, shifting innovations of clever men; and that the laws of daily life, however imperfectly understood and exemplified, should be, after all, the law of love, of loyal love to the King and Master of us all, of love to one another for His sake, and in the illumination of His Example. *Cui bono?* For what end and what reward? To stand in the long list of American Schools somewhere in the upper class in number and reputation? To multiply adequate buildings and equipment, that St. Paul's may be reckoned among the New England institutions of a higher grade? To carry on an honourable, but still a close, competition with other more liberally endowed schools for patronage and renown? When I mention such ends and objects, do they not seem sordid and

unworthy? Do we not know that we have something noble at heart, something to justify toil and sacrifice, and the expenditure of one's best powers, and even of these priceless, ever-lessening years? Have we not some more enduring reward in view than men's fickle plaudits and complimentary paragraphs in newspapers? Would not one of you younger fellows, turned here, by God's loving Spirit working on an instructed, living conscience, from poor, grovelling, unworthy ways, to serve our Glorious King with a true, brave, consistent service, be of more real account to us than all the funds in the Bank of England could be, if put at our disposal? And when the end of it all comes, and the individual work, so poor at best, must be laid by, would it not be a reward, most undeserved, but most desired, to open at last the tired eyes, which death had sealed:

Where light, and life and joy and peace
In undivided empire reign,
And thronging angels never cease
Their deathless strain;

Where saints are clothed in spotless white
And evening shadows never fall,
Where Thou, Eternal Light of Light,
Art Lord of all.[1]

[1] Godfrey Thring.

SERMON XIII

MORAL POWER

PHIL. iii. 10.

"That I may know Him and the power of His Resurrection."

HUMAN life, looked at on its practical side, is made up of two things, action and suffering. The first necessity of every agent and every sufferer is an end — some end to look forward to, to be compassed by action, or reached by endurance. And the second necessity is power, whether from within us or without us; power to attain our end, which will put victorious strength into our action and the patience of hope into our suffering. We cannot think of greatness without power. Some sort of power is necessary to accomplish great ends, or the result is only demoralization, failure, and collapse. Our nature and present state of existence are, as we feel and know, potential, capable of more than has yet been manifested, and struggling for higher and better things than have yet been attained. The earth, from which these mortal bodies were taken, and to which they will return, supplies a competent illustration. For, though she still lies chilled and fettered by winter's slow departure, and snow-clad distances and leafless trees afford

but sparing promise of that munificence which her bounteous breast intends, we, notwithstanding, are quite sure that days are not far off when the power of the summer life shall meet the life within her, when the reluctant forces which still stand sentinel-like over her slumbers shall melt away before the lances of the sun, when verdure shall adorn the sod, and the forests put on diadems of beauty, and the "valleys also shall stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing."[1] The power is latent now. But for our experience in the seasons' changes we should be hopeless of the spring. And in like manner I believe every heart among us is pregnant with this unconscious longing for, prophecy and anticipation of, larger power, of power which shall fulfil it and make it fulfil itself, which can make hopes fruitions, and exchange the promise of the morning star for the glorious realization of the perfect day. And further, I may say that the power, of which we are most in need, and of the present lack of which we are most frequently reminded, of which we have always an unexpressed consciousness that it might and ought to be ours, is *Moral Power* — the power to stimulate and control, not the forces of the world outside, but feeling, resolution, and action in the little world within; the power not only in a general way to plan and dream of good wrought, or to be wrought by us, but also strongly to will, and earnestly and persistently to carry out, some definite

[1] Ps. lxv. 14.

work, in the humblest of conditions as well as in the greatest, in the fulfilment of lowly duties as much as in enterprises of large benevolence. Mental power is a great possession, and a great factor in the work of the world. The ability to grapple with intellectual difficulties, to take hold and fairly master any one of the innumerable problems, historical, social, scientific, continually presented to us; to follow out a chain of close and painful reasoning until one has reached the point where light breaks in, and the demonstration is clear and convincing — this is a noble gift of God to some. Many a struggling spirit invokes such power. But *Moral Power* is more a power, and infinitely worthier of our desire. A man may find or forge a key to unlock some little compartment of nature's boundless treasure-house, and meanwhile that which holds inward the passionate depths, the moral possibilities, for good or evil of his own nature be altogether unsought for and unfound. Why should the spirit within us, which is receptive of the influences of the Holy Spirit of God, be hampered and baffled in its diviner aims? Why, when it would rise and soar, is it leaden-weighted with ignoble passions and desires? Why should it be occupied and entangled in vain and trifling pursuits, petty ideas of narrow minds, of low suggestions of vulgar ones, when once there has risen upon its field of vision the Divine Person, Who is the central figure of our race, and its realized ideal as well as its atoning

sacrifice? Why should there be such feeble, abortive struggles with selfishness and appetite and indolence and folly, such moral effeminacy in yielding to the besetting sin, in taking up with an inadequate conception and an inferior performance of duty, when, as during the past week, the Cross is lifted up before us as the inspiration of all human action and suffering, and at once the lesson and the measure of self-sacrifice? What we each need, beyond all our other needs, and in our secret hearts know that we need, is *Moral Power* — power, for example, to forgive, to speak, ay! and to think kindly of those who are not kind or loving or considerate to us, with whom, as men speak, we are justly offended; power to resist and control our lower instincts, to say a resolute "*No!*" to an impure tendency of thought, a lustful impulse, an evil solicitation coming as our conscience tells us from Satan, not from God; power to be industrious and faithful when the animal nature inclines to lounge and sleep and waste golden hours, and abuse opportunities which are numbered and can never be recalled; power, I say, to rise above our vanities, our shames, and our discouragements, and to beat down Satan under our feet. Have we this power to-night, or any degree of it, and if not, why not? In and of ourselves, indeed, with the most wonderful and varied endowments, and absolutely unlimited capabilities of spiritual growth, we are morally feeble. Reason, a sound judgment, the calculations of self-interest, may

aid one and another to repress ruinous vices, to leave off, perhaps never to form, disgraceful habits. A native pride of character helps some, a wish to be thought well of helps others. Some few noble souls have thirsted for virtue for virtue's sake, and struggled by themselves to lay aside every yoke, and mount to a higher plane of living; but how partially they have succeeded! One might almost say how signally they have failed! Creatures of infinite possibilities, infinite resources, infinite weaknesses, with body, soul, and spirit so moulded and organized as to be capable of receiving the celestial gift of saintliness, yet incapable by ourselves of moral manhood, immortal yet mortal, grovelling yet aspiring, lying under the sentence of death yet living in a world which has been visited and redeemed by the Eternal Son of God — this is our condition of nature. The spiritual senses do not act. The spiritual world is as if it did not exist. A great stone lies, the dead weight of corrupt habit and opinion and moral powerlessness, at the door of this sepulchre. "The good that we would we do not: but the evil which we would not, that we do."[1] Yet, with this true picture of the incompleteness of what we may almost call the penal debility of our moral nature before us, we are met on this blessed Easter Day with another great fact answering to this — not an argument, or chain of reasoning, however irrefragable, nor an impassioned exhortation like other

[1] *Vide* Rom. vii. 19.

exhortations, ineffective to stir and brace the will to comply with it — but an historical fact, of all facts, to be sure, the most living and glorious and precious, but still as much a fact of history as any other indisputable fact, and one which afforded starting-point and basis, as well as inference and end, to the Apostles' preaching. It was in truth that which supplied them with the moral momentum with which they breasted a hostile world. It was that second necessity, which I mentioned at the outset, of human life fulfilled and exalted, and human nature redeemed and rectified, to which we are brought back by the few words of the text, which strike the key-note of this, the highest Festival in the Christian Year.

I said that the hampered, sin-thwarted soul thirsts for power. Of course it must, so far and so long as it feels itself thwarted. And a Power has entered this level of existence in which we move, nay, more, has entered our humanity, and in and for humanity fought the great battle which has asserted and won deliverance and supernatural power for the morally enfeebled and disheartened, the condemned and bound. He Who said, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth,"[1] and of His earthly Life, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again,"[1] proved, as on this day, His everlasting faithfulness, when He burst the bars of death, and came in the unsullied brightness of His glory from the dominion

[1] St. Matt. xxviii. 18. [2] St. John x. 18.

of the Grave. Power indeed, all mighty, all wise, all merciful, was displayed, from the Mystery of His Holy Incarnation throughout that wonderfully blended life. With more than the usual measure of physical infirmity, with "a visage marred more than any man, and a form more than the sons of men; growing up as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground,"[1] yet from time to time the Divine Majesty refused to be concealed, and broke forth in sudden brightness like the April sun from behind a veil of cloud. Read the Gospel narrative of His lowest humiliation, even on the Cross, dying as any man might die, as all men do; in the last extremity of bodily anguish, when the vital energies were failing, under all the simplicity of the Gospel language, that is manifest which forces home the conviction that He conquered in dying, that in the very hour and power of darkness a mightier power was present, temporarily submerged and shrouded, but not vanquished nor destroyed. And if this latent power of the Godhead is clearly traceable from the beginning of the Gospels to the closing transactions of Good Friday; if He Who lay in the sepulchre the night of Friday, and all of yesterday until this morning, still held in His own hands the power to resume that life which He had taken of His own will, and of His own will relinquished, this day it breaks forth, undimmed and triumphant, the power of His Resurrection, or, as the Apostle elsewhere

[1] *Cf.* Is. lii. 14, and liii. 2.

expresses it, "declared to be the Son of God with power, . . . by the resurrection from the dead."[1]

But, one may say, the fact of our Lord's Resurrection admitted, and that it was the crowning manifestation of His Almighty Power; admitted that it was the seal to His work and its acceptance, and the promise and pledge of that inexplicable doctrine of the resurrection of the body which the Gospel and the Gospel only reveals; what has this to do with my obtaining moral power? How can any such participation of Divine power be communicated to me as to do me individually any more good than to have witnessed such a miracle as the resurrection of Lazarus, or Christ's walking on the sea? How am I to penetrate St. Paul's meaning, and to "know Him and the power of His Resurrection"? Here am I in all my self-accused weakness! There is He, all-powerful, clothed in majesty and honour! How can I lay hold of the power of His Resurrection, or by any means attain, myself, to the resurrection from the dead? And this is the answer: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."[2] He took our nature upon Him, that He might unite it to His own, that with all its moral feeble-

[1] Rom. i. 4. [2] Heb. ii. 14, 15.

ness and taint and disability, He might infuse it with this new and needed element of power. He died in it, that He might destroy death. He rose in it, that it too might rise, even now and here, not only at the general resurrection in the last day, but in a spiritual resurrection from spiritual bondage, ineptitude, despair. He so imparted this, His own Resurrection Life, to His Body, the Church, that by union with Himself in the spiritual seeking and finding, which he has enjoined, in the Sacraments which He has ordained, we may be born anew, may have a fresh life implanted in us, may live and grow after a spiritual sort as well as a natural, fed and sustained by His Body and His Blood. It is indeed a hidden power which is thus conveyed. Whether we do lay hold upon it, by being incorporated in a true and living sense into His Resurrection Life, depends upon our wills; but

> Our wills are ours, we know not how.
> Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.[1]

"As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."[2] If we lay firm hold and believing hold upon this Sacramental Life which He is, we shall no more fail of drawing in power, moral power, power to become new creatures in Christ Jesus, to walk before Him in newness of life, than we should if we opened our blinds at noonday to receive the full warm beams of the sun. Christ is the Vine. The

[1] "In Memoriam" [2] St. John v. 26.

branches live and grow, and are clothed with leaves and clusters from the overflowing fulness of the parent stem. If no obstruction clogs the unseen pores, the sap reaches freely to the tiniest spiral in ample flow. The life is not in the branches, but in the Vine. Cut off the soul from Christ, and it withers and dies.

Do not think this is a mechanical union only, involving no strong emotions of the soul, no special endeavour on our side; that it is a work wrought upon men indifferently, without reference to their individual wills and fitness. If Christ, the risen Christ, be in us, the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. There is one essential on our parts, namely: reality, genuineness. In proportion to our honest desire to escape our besetting sin, our clinging weakness, and according to the depth of conviction with which, knowing that the power of His Resurrection is our great remedy, our heart and our flesh cry out for the Living God, will be the nearness of our access, and the fulness and sufficiency of His supply. How far we draw in the power of the new life is measured by the completeness of our death unto sin, of our self-surrender and abasement. "Mortify and kill all vices in us."[1] That is our Easter cry. Raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness.

And, blessed be His Name, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us,"[2] and "Because He lives, we shall

[1] Collect for Holy Innocents' Day. [2] Heb. vii. 25.

live also."[1] In the power of His Resurrection He sits at the Right Hand of the Father. There he pleads our cause for us. He sways His people. His sceptre is a sceptre of love, a love which pierces and constrains, at which rocks are rent, and the high hills do bow. Brought near to Him in the way He has consecrated, "through the veil, that is to say His flesh,"[2] "of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace."[3] Hearts may fail, the spirits flag, the flesh be weak, temptations thicken, sorrows throng, clouds darken the old brightness of our Easter days. But one touch of Thine, "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,"[4] shall quicken our languid energies, and raise and reanimate the hopes which seemed to have perished like summer flowers. For "Thou art the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Thee, though He were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Thee shall never die."[5]

[1] St. John xiv. 19. [2] Heb. x. 20. [3] St. John i. 16.
[4] Tennyson's "In Memoriam." [5] St. John xi. 25, 26.

SERMON XIV.

THE PROMISE OF LIFE

St. John xiv. 19.

"Because I live, ye shall live also."

Life is a gift, and cometh down, like every other good and perfect gift, from above. For, with all the efforts of our modern analysis, we are not one step nearer the beginnings of life. For that we must ever fall back upon Him, Who has Himself declared to us, "I am the Life."[1] As the hand that fashions the torch applies the flame to light it, so He, Who has so ordered His world that we may say that He does Himself breathe into these mortal bodies of ours, vessels of clay that they are, the breath of life, is the source of our natural life; through Him man becomes a living soul. The life of reason is the special communication of Him who is the first born of the creation. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."[2] These currents of life, which swell and flow, in heaven above, in earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, have their eternal spring before the Throne of God. Whatever minor causes He wills should operate for the spread and per-

[1] St. John xi. 25 and xiv. 6. [2] *Ibid.* i. 4.

petuation of this life, He is its author. In Him the whole creation live and move and have their being. He is the Shepherd of all the manifold forms of existence. The round world, and all that therein is, is but one of the folds of His innumerable pastures. His right hand hath spanned the Heavens. The stars are the dust of His feet.

Life is His gift, the vital principle in these mortal bodies, the life of will and reason in these immortal souls, the life supernatural of these conscience-bearing spirits, in which these lower lives of sense and reason may be transfigured and glorified by personal union with the Word made flesh. Even this physical frame of ours, which the Apostle calls our body of humiliation,[1] which comes into existence through physical causes, like those which obtain in the animal world, which is subject to diseases and finally to death, if we sleep in Jesus, shall be changed that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. So the prophet, speaking in the person of Our Blessed Lord, exclaims: "Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead Body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."[2]

Over and above this natural life is that supernatural life of the members of Christ, of which the New Testa-

[1] Phil. iii. 21—τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν. [2] Is. xxvi. 19.

ment is full from the beginning to the end — the life of grace, of which our Lord speaks in such words as these: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life;"[1] and again: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."[2] There is thus a twofold aspect of creation, depending upon the Divine agency and upon the Divine presence, and so St. Paul can truly say: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."[3]

No one of us can implant the vital principle in any form of matter; we cannot endow the tiniest insect with living energy. Far less can we start the life of reason in a soul. When we pass the bounds of nature, and enter the new creation, which is the dominion of grace, we recognize our helplessness. The life, in all its forms, proceeds from that Spirit Who raised Jesus from the dead; sustained, renewed, it is the gift of the same Spirit working in us. He admits men into such glorified relations as by nature they cannot have. He, by this union, enables them to triumph over their animal natures and their earth-imprisoned souls. Finally, these mortal bodies, sown in corruption, He will raise in incorruption, sown in dishonour to be raised in glory, sown in the extreme of physical weakness to be raised in superhuman power, sown "a natural body controlled on every side by physical law," to be raised, a "true body still, but a body that belongs to the sphere

[1] St. John iv. 4. [2] *Ibid.* xi. 26. [3] Gal. ii. 20.

of spirit."[1] This Life therefore is Divine. No man can take it of himself. No man can imagine the fulness of its immortality of himself. He who rose on this Day won it for us. He pitied us that we were brought under the dominion of death. He descended from the Home of Angels. He took upon Him our nature, body and soul alike, and "joined it by an indissoluble union to His Own Eternal Person, that in this Human Nature He might do battle for us, and become the second Adam, the First Man of the New Creation," that we with thankful hearts might sing this morning:

> Since by man came death,
> By man came also the resurrection of the dead.
> For as in Adam all die,
> Even so in Christ shall all be made alive.[2]

So much for the general truth.

We need to take hold of it as individuals, to feel what it means for *us* and to *us*. We have long known it as it stands in the Articles of the Christian Faith. But that knowing, important as it is, is insufficient. It is like "knowing Christ after the flesh."[3] There is another way of knowing it. Let us not rest short of that.

"Because I live, ye shall live also." What must these words have meant to the Apostles when they first heard them! It was on Thursday evening. The Blessed Sacrament had just been instituted. For the first time the eleven had received that Divine

[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 42-44. [2] *Ibid.* 21, 22. [3] 2 Cor. v. 16.

Food which hereafter, in the heat of the desert, in the chill of the dungeon, was to be their sustaining force, their manna in the wilderness, their present assurance of a living, unchanging love. There was a hush of fear and uncertainty, a presentiment of coming trouble, of disappointment, if not of danger and desolation. One of their number, after a mysterious interchange of signs and words with their Master, had abruptly gone out into the darkness. They had heard the Lord say to him: "That thou doest, do quickly."[1] They knew not what to think. They were like men on shipboard, when night falls with tokens of rising storm, the waves and winds tumultuous, and no stars in the sky. Jesus went on discoursing in quiet tones. His words were all of comfort and hope, of light amid darkness, peace in storms, safety in battle, life in the valley and shadow of death, life in death and beyond the grave. "I will not leave you comfortless," He said, "I will come to you,"[2] ever and at all times. The promise is not for the near future only, but abiding. It began to be fulfilled on this day, when Christ's Humanity was glorified. "Yet a little while," He went on, "and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me; because I live, ye shall live also."[3] Because of their partaking of His Life, they had this power of vision, which death should not take from them. For the "Fulness of life is the open vision of

[1] St.. John xiii. 27. [2] *Ibid.* xiv. 18. [3] *Ibid.* 19.

God." They were unable at the time to take in His meaning. After the fifty days were over, they came to understand Him better. For they were men like us. Though taught of Jesus, and to be indwelt by His Spirit more fully than are Christians of our day, still Pentecost had not yet come, and, in the words of to-day's Gospel, "they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead."[1] This much they may have gathered — that they should have a vision of their Lord, which the world should not have; that some strange crisis was at hand; for a little while, He was to be taken away from them, out of their sight. How, they knew not, nor that one of their company would ask, "Where have they laid Him?"[2] Nor again, that as on this evening He would stand among them clothed with the morning glory of the Resurrection, the wounds in Hands and Feet and Side still open, kept open by the fire of His love. The *world* should not see Him during those Easter days. Only His true children have a share in the gladness of His Resurrection. What would it have been to Pilate, or Caiaphas, on this evening, to have had Him, Whom they had despised, condemned, and crucified, appear suddenly in the brightness of His Risen Humanity? Only a terror, a foretaste of that day, when "they shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced,"[3] and "every eye shall see Him . . . and all kindreds of the earth shall wail

[1] St. John xx. 9. [2] *Ibid.* 2 and 15. [3] Zech. xii. 10.

because of Him."[1] The joys of His Kingdom are understood by the world as little as its sorrows. The Apostles in that hour had but a faint conception of what was in store for them; but the words did say this much, that, present to their bodily sight or not, He would always be present, even in the darkest night, to their waking hearts: they need not seek the Living among the dead. Their hope was not in a sepulchre. In no dead Saviour from day to day should they avow belief. If the clouds received Him out of their sight, it should be only out of the bounded range of bodily vision; but there was to be a closer and an unbroken gaze. The soul of man, left to itself, lacks the life and strength it needs. It finds them in the Eternal Christ. As on this night He stood in their midst, and they knew that it was Himself, though in the body of His glory, of beauty indescribable, of marvellous freedom of movement, inaccessible to decay, so faith should always see Him, their Good Shepherd, moving among the golden candlesticks, in His Right Hand seven stars and in His Heart the names of His loyal children; His Countenance no more overcast with the sadness of love rejected, but "as the sun shineth in his strength";[2] His voice no more broken by sorrows of parting and anguish of dying, but melodious and strong "as the sound of many waters."[3] They may have had a sort of silent consciousness that the past three years with Him had gradually been work-

[1] Rev. i. 7. [2] *Ibid.* 16. [3] *Ibid.* 15.

ing in them a spiritual change; that the outward look of things had altered for them; that they now had a different measure of duty, new and larger views of ancient truth; that the flowers in the valleys and the stones of the highway had a language to their hearts unheard before; that they looked upon the old landscapes, with new eyes, invested in a tenderer light of sacred memories and association; that they were now living a new life in His Divine and Perfect Life. Even then they may have had a shadowy sense of what after years proved true, that, taken from their local companionship, He was to live more truly with them, and they with Him, because that in them, which was most really Himself, should abide; not merely the thought of Him, or the memory of Him, or the love of Him — all these; but more, even Himself, in His undying strength, and that their lives should be folded up and wrapped into His Life as inseparably as the elements in air or water, or as light and heat in fire; that in His Life, living Him, they should teach Him to the world, and call the world to Him, and in the Ministry and Sacraments of His Church should graft other souls into Him to live by Him and for Him; that with the consciousness of this everlasting Life abiding in them they should have no hampering fear of death, nor of anything that causes death. The threats of persecutors, the stones that crushed, the thongs that tore, the stake, the wild beasts of the amphitheatre, should go for nothing, being power-

less to harm that Life, which they lived, which in the Body, once worn and emaciated, lived on for them in eternal vigour beyond the reach of dissolution and decay. "Let the body die," they should be able to exclaim. "Let the body die; it is not real death. That which thou sowest, is not quickened except it die."[1] Hasten to spurn these ashes to the winds, as the sower flings the seed-corn over the plain. I live, I shall live. A little while, and the hour cometh when these earthly particles shall hear the voice that summons to life the sleeping dust. Mine, too, shall hear; and that shall spring from my last resting-place which shall nevermore blanch and wither before the shadow-casting wing of death. Meanwhile my spirit will be with Christ Who is my Life, safe sheltered in fadeless bowers of Paradise, waiting for the perfect consummation and the unveiled Presence of Him "Whom, not having seen I love, in Whom, though now I see Him not, yet believing, that is, seeing with the spiritual sight, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."[2] Such, in brief compass, the words of the text came to mean to those to whom they were first spoken — not all at once, indeed, but again, as good seed in a receptive soil, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear,"[3] until their hearts were possessed by them, and the timid were made brave, and the weak and vacillating strong.

And so to ourselves, to-night, immersed in our various

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 36. [2] *Cf.* 1 St. Pet. i. 8. [3] St. Mark iv. 28.

cares and troubles and temptations, as in all past Easter seasons, the Lord Jesus says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." He has given us the gift of the new birth, not that we should remain spiritual infants, or rather dwarfs, morally misshapen and ungrown, but since we are received as His children by adoption, and incorporated into His Body, that "being dead unto sin and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in His death, we should crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that, as we are made partakers of His death, we may also be partakers of His Resurrection."[1] His Life is given us, that we may live before Him, no more to walk in darkness, but to have the Light of Life. Life is our inheritance, not death. It is a Living Saviour Whose steps we are to follow.

And as a life is proved by movement and progress, so preëminently is the Divine Life, by this following the footsteps of our Lord. Having chosen him for our sole leader, the guardian of our souls, we are to cleave to Him, through calm and storm, when all goes well with us, and "when days are dark and friends are few." To do this, to maintain this sacred nearness, we must be all the while coming to Him. He said to the Jews, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have Life."[2] No one need say that he can be no better or do no better until he has tried, until, that is, he has made

[1] *Vide* Office of Baptism. [2] St. John v. 40.

it his chief end to come as often to His Saviour as his way of life admits; indeed to look upon his daily work as such a following. Is your soul sick? Jesus Christ can make you whole. Are you burdened with besetting sins? Jesus Christ can ease you of the miserable load. Are you like the lame man in the Acts, helpless to rise and walk of yourself? His Name, through faith in His Name, can make you strong, yea, the faith which is by Him can give you perfect soundness in the presence of us all.[1] Jesus lives! How can we doubt His grace and power? That Presence quells evil tempers, restrains angry, impatient words and drives back to hell the spirit of uncleanness, gives strength faithfully to perform duties which bring no pleasant, visible returns, in hope of His smile of approval. Following Him draws by a dear constraint to His Altar, that in the strength of that meat we may go to the Mount of God.

Fear no more, faint hearts; be no more cold and careless, O ye of little faith. Christ ever liveth. He is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. Now, as ever, He is able "to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him";[2] to feed them in green pastures, to lead them forth by waters of comfort. Christ, our Life! And oh that He may be ours, and that living and believing in Him, we may never die! Oh that each one of us here, no matter how far off to-night from his Saviour, may yet be able to say: "O my glorious,

[1] *Vide* Acts iii. 16. [2] Heb. vii. 25.

long-suffering King, I may not, I cannot, doubt Thee. Dost Thou not live, O mine Holy One? O Love, holiest, tenderest, purest! O Light of Life, draw me, and I will follow Thee."

O Love! Who once shalt bid me rise
From out this dying life of ours:
O Love, Who once o'er yonder skies
Shalt set me in the fadeless bowers:
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.[1]

[1] Hymn 192, "Hymns Ancient and Modern."

SERMON XV

THE HIRELING

St. John x. 13.

"The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep."

After the most useful and profitable discourses, to which you listened last Sunday from this Gospel,[1] it may seem strange to you that I to-day call your attention again to another of its manifold teachings. Let me say, in passing, that, when we have been privileged to listen to such instruction and exposition of God's Word, here and elsewhere, as appeals most forcibly to our conscience, while it quickens and enlightens our understandings, it is not enough to give a transient hearing, as by a sort of constraint, or even to allow our feelings to be carried away for the time, till we almost realize the power and sweetness of God's faithful service. Nor is it sufficient to commend the preacher, his manner, or his matter. Mere praise is unworthy the dignity and the importance of the Truth uttered. No. It comes to us with authority. It is

[1] Referring to sermons preached in the Chapel of St. Paul's School on the Second Sunday after Easter, April 23, 1882, by the Rev. Father Hall, S. S. J. E. (now Bishop of Vermont).

really the Voice of God our Saviour instructing and pleading with us through His messengers. We are not through with the Message when the words are ended. The efficacy of the teaching to us is measured by the practical effect of that teaching upon our lives, upon our modes of thinking, speaking, and acting. The speaker concludes. The Message has been sent forth. The responsibility rests with us who hear. We are not through with last Sunday's sermons. There was that in them which the youngest here could understand and lay to heart. How did we all hear, not only the younger but the older? And how have we followed up what we heard? Our Lord reiterates the warning, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."[1] The best use to which we can put the outward ears of our body, and the inward ear of our conscience, is to listen, and to lay to heart those calls to His blessed service, which are our blessing in this day of our visitation, and with which we shall surely be confronted in the day of our account. Besides, the lessons from any passage of the Gospel are practically exhaustless.

The words are from last Sunday's Gospel. It was the Sunday of the Good Shepherd. We heard the inspiring words, "I know my sheep and am known of Mine." "The Good Shepherd giveth His Life for the Sheep."[2] But not only was the example of the Good Shepherd brought before us. There was another

[1] St. Matt. xi. 15. [2] St. John x. 14 and 11.

example in marked contrast, namely, that of the hireling, to be considered and shunned. We are urged to imitate the example and to embrace the life of the One, to Whom the conduct and the spirit of the other are in direct opposition. Most of us do our work with at least some reference to wages, to the material means, on which, as society is organized, we depend for the bread we eat and the clothes we wear. To labour and to receive pay for it, is not, therefore, to be a hireling. For "the labourer is worthy of his hire."[1] "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."[2] Honest work of whatever kind demands, and should receive, remuneration. This is established even in regard to that which is the highest and has the least connection with merely material interests. "Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."[3] The hireling is not one who receives pay, therefore, but one who looks chiefly to his hire, who cares little or nothing for the work or trust committed to him, who consults his own ease and interest at any cost of honour or duty. If there is anything which demands sacrifice, however trivial, he shirks it; anything unpopular to say, he keeps silent; any appearance or alarm of danger, he runs away. The special trust

[1] St. Luke x. 7. [2] 1 Tim. v. 18. [3] 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

committed to such a character may be the humblest. As in the Gospel, it may be nothing more important than to keep a few sheep on the mountains, to feed, and fold, and fend; to husband one or two small talents, and cultivate and use them for the purpose given; to follow some humble calling with a faithful heart, in happy exemption from grave anxieties; to take care of a little child; to make a few hard acres beautiful with plenty, or, it may ascend to the superlative of human responsibility, and take in the weightiest issues, to be one of the ποιμένες λαῶν, a ruler and a councillor in the state, or one of the pastors of the flock of Christ, with His message of love and salvation to proclaim, His sacraments to dispense, His discipline to administer. Any charge, from the least to the greatest, may betray the hireling. Any vocation, from keeping flocks to watching for the souls of men, may test fidelity. And it is a great and elevating thought to those whose duty, as with some of us, consists largely in attention to, and careful performance of, small details, that it is the same virtue in the most diminished as in what seem the great fields of action. The faithfulness may be the same in kind, to whatever end it is directed, and so may the unfaithfulness. A man may be a hireling on a throne, as ignominious as in a workshop. Every mother and father of a child has in that child a trust from, and for, the Lord, and in the effort which they put forth, and the end at which they aim, they display the hireling's or the

Good Shepherd's spirit. While, therefore, the words of the text have a first reference to the spirit, which should be sought by all those who, in a nearer sense, share the work of the Good Shepherd, namely, the pastors of Christ's Church here on earth (and His is the example which should be the rule of their work, and model of their lives), they equally apply to all the service which we have to render to God and to our fellow men. The most trifling duty may partake of the one spirit or the other; and as Herbert says:

> Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
> Makes that and the action fine.[1]

Let us pursue for a moment the contrast between the hireling and the faithful servant. Whatever our calling and position among men, we are all servants. So we are called in Scripture — so we shall be judged. To have the spirit of the hireling, to do our work of whatever kind in that spirit, is to merit condemnation. The highest praise anyone can receive is to be called a faithful servant. How can we know what spirit we are of? It is an Easter question.

The hireling makes his performance of duty a means only. So far as he does the work set before him, he does it, not because it is his bounden duty to do it as well and thoroughly as ever he can, but because he is constrained to do it by the eyes of men, by the expectations of his fellows, by the necessities of his position,

[1] George Herbert: "The Elixir."

by the dread of disgrace. Whatever he esteems wages, and thinks worth his exertions, takes precedence. Duty is altogether a subordinate consideration. Is his labour that of the hands? He does just enough to secure his pay, without regard to the quality of his work or the temper in which it is performed. Is it labour of the mind? He makes effort by caprice, not on principle. He writes books to sell, or he makes orations to be admired and praised. He studies to pass an examination, or he neglects studies for the sake of something else which he enjoys or values more. Think not that this spirit will be confined to the every-day work of life. The hireling in the counting-house, or the schoolroom, or the vineyard, will be a hireling in his religion as well. Very possibly, since the wages which God gives to His servants are not usually visible, tangible profits, he may dismiss the subject altogether, or he may take on just enough of religion to aid him in getting the confidence or good word of men; or, if sincere, he may really make religion a matter of bargain, and expect, for a little attention to a few religious observances, and a cautious abstinence from gross offences, to win heaven — at least, to escape what follows upon losing it. In each and all of his various avocations, the hireling's end is not to do his best, to perform, so far as in him lies, a hearty, willing, perfect work, but rather to avoid doing any more than he must, if he would attain some other end, which is his real object. And so his

standard of duty is very uncertain and fluctuating; and self-interest, or, to speak more accurately, self-gratification, takes its place. And therefore the hireling risks nothing. Why should he? If a lion or a bear attack the sheep confided to his custody, he obeys the instinct of self-preservation. What are a few sheep in comparison to his own life? If the sacred interests of a community, a household, nay, if Christ's own Name and cause are in his keeping, only one course can be expected of him — that he will avoid trouble and unpopular collisions at any cost, even that of opening the gates to the enemy, or of deserting his standard in the very crisis and heat of the action. Comes there a call to self-sacrifice, an opportunity to render signal service, a chance to do such patient and lowly but fruitful work as shall bless a friend, or console a pastor, or give the death-blow to some prevailing evil? The noble hireling has another way of looking at it. His own pleasure, comfort, popularity, or pecuniary interest must be consulted. Duty is very well in its place, but that place is behind the door, or under the footstool. The wages, which come from a determined, steadfast performance of duty, he thinks small, inadequate, and uncertain. And wages are the only end for which he is willing to make any outlay of pains.

We need not deceive ourselves. The spirit of the hireling is the prevailing temper of the day. It is prominent in the councils of the nation. It is a controlling

element in the financial world. It influences most dealings of man with man. It mars and blights the relations of man to God. There are young hirelings and old hirelings, hireling children and hireling parents, hireling rich and hireling poor, hireling Christians and hireling worldlings, hireling people and hireling pastors. To all of whom something else besides duty is the governing principle, of whom it may be truly said in the words of the Psalmist, "The way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."[1] Hence the low standards and the low performances, the absence of knightly honour and the false notions about honour. What would this generation make of the famous old proverb, "To a gentleman his duty is his law"? Hence the superficial, shiftless work of every description, from that of the schoolboy in making up a lesson, and that of the mechanic who handles poor material with cheap workmanship, and the tradesman who sells a worthless article at the highest price, till we come to the man who sells his influence and vote in Congress, or who preaches what is not the Gospel to secure a crowd of ignorant and thoughtless followers.

Turn to the opposite and contrasted spirit of the Good Shepherd, of the faithful, true-hearted servant. He sets Duty as an end. The question is not one of success, riches, pleasure, popularity, gain, greater or less. It is, What ought I to do? and am I doing it? To

[1] Ps. xiv. 7.

perceive and know what duty is is the first endeavour, and faithfully to fulfil the same is the second. The rule of duty reaches to all the relations and work of life. It comprehends the little as well as the great. "The great days of the year are few, and, when they come, they seldom bring anything great to us. And the matter of all common days is made up of little things, or ordinary and stale transactions." "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."[1] "God has so ordered things, that great and sudden leaps are seldom observable. Every advance in the general must be made by advancing in particular." The highest end is reached by the best means in any case, when we place before us our duty as that for which we are willing to expend all our energies — duty at any cost, without exceptions, in the little as in the great, to the poor and friendless as well as to those who have influence and riches — duty which begins at home, and in the closer relations of life, and widens as life goes on, or one's sphere enlarges — duty which does not need to have some vigilant eye upon it to note its truancies, which reads its lesson in the circumstances by which it is surrounded, and trembles, in its loneliness, before the Eye of God. And performing duty in this wise demands sacrifice. The selfish will must be surrendered — the inclination to follow one's own ease and pleasure or fancy; to put off distasteful work; to withhold the

[1] St. Luke xvi. 10.

unpopular though righteous word; to build pleasant air-castles of what might be, rather than dig the humble foundations which alone can be; to dream of great achievements and neglect little ones; to lounge and talk and waste time agreeably, when one day should tell another of something accomplished, and the review at night should certify it — of all these congenial, easy-going ways duty demands the surrender, that her biddings may be performed, so that one may be, not a hireling, but a faithful servant, not a hearer only, but also a doer of the word. There follow certain results from such a single eye to duty, which is only a synonym for the will of God. For as it makes the work of life, however multifarious, simple by impressing on it one character, and speeding it in one direction, so, of necessity, it makes one trustworthy among his fellow-men, not only in appearance, but in truth. For, sooner or later, loyal and true hearts are known even to men. They are not so numerous that they are likely to escape observation. And though that is not the motive for which to be true, it is worth while, even in the world's judgment, to be worthy of trust, always settled and steadfast, so that men know where to find us, and that our word is sacred and our promise inviolable. We pray to-day that "those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Religion," that is, all those who are baptized, "may avoid those things that are contrary to their profession and follow all such things as are agreeable

to the same,"[1] in other words, may not be hirelings in their duty toward God, but may render a full and whole-hearted service, seeking not how little, but how much, and not asking, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?"[2] but "Since all things are Thine own, what of Thine own can we give Thee?" All depends upon the spirit in which we live and think and work. A wise writer says "that the vastest and brightest wish and conception, which the human mind can form, expresses itself by the simplest and humblest actions. There can be no vaster and higher wish than for life eternal, yet the fruits and manifestations of this wish are acts of plain goodness, of conscience and lowly charity. This result is often conspicuous in good persons as they grow old, and feel themselves drawing closer to the eternal world. Then it is, when they stand on the extreme confines of this life, that the desire 'to lay hold on eternal life' is most strong and earnest, and the value of goodness and holiness as the access to this life is most clear and undoubted. The simplest, plainest and sincerest sort of goodness is the only thing to care for. All else goes for nothing, or not for much." And this is the spirit to strive for now, in youth and bodily health, the very opposite of the hireling's, namely, the single eye, the honest purpose, the perfect will to do duty, and to honour God. Oh the simplicity and blessedness of such a way of living! Think of the small, mean things which

[1] Collect for the Third Sunday after Easter. [2] Mal. iii. 8.

degrade our life here, the petty fault-finding, the foolish sensitiveness, the wilful misunderstandings, the double motives, the vanity and the self-will, the careless and profane language, the unfaithfulness to plain duty, the deafness to the voice of command, the faithlessness to one another, the self-seeking and the selfishness — all summed up in the poor, half-hearted, wayward following, if following at all, of our Risen Lord and Head. Meanwhile He hears and sees it all. He is not impatient with us. He waits to raise us from hirelings to be His own true men. He studies our best happiness. To-day, for example, His Day, spent cheerfully, with all one's heart in doing His Will, worshipping, praising, rejoicing in Him and what concerns and belongs to Him, He would make to any of us a true Lord's Day, a royal day, on which the Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing in His wings. From Easter to Ascension are the great Forty Days, when He stayed on earth in His Resurrection Body, and ever and anon His followers met Him, and He came among them, blessing and to bless. He wants nothing from us, nothing of ours, but *us* — that we should give our whole selves, an unconditional surrender, to Him. Why? That we may be forgiven and helped, and may go in and out before Him and find rest and peace. Who else can do anything for us? His Hands are raised in benediction, the Hands that were pierced in the bloody toil of saving us. Hirelings and hypocrites He will not bless,

nor will they care for His blessing. But He knows the honest and true heart, the humble and willing service. And of such He says: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them Eternal Life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."[1]

[1] St. John x, 27, 28.

SERMON XVI

THE TREASURE OF THE HEART

St. Matthew vi. 21.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

A person's treasure is what he prizes most. It varies with the person: his years, and sense, and character, and his appreciation of values. A little child's treasure, some broken, battered toy, may be as really such to him as the bonds and mortgages, which represent great wealth, to the man whose heart is set on riches. Everything earthly is relative, nearly all our standards and opinions, our ideas of happiness, our aims and motives. They vary with the changes and experiences of life.

It is safe to assert that no work we have in hand will have much result unless our hearts are in it. You lay yourself out for what you really love and take pleasure in, or for what you greatly desire. No road seems long and wearisome, every stage of which brings one nearer home. These are very simple and common truths, or rather truisms. No one disputes them. They have their foundation in human nature. We are made up of desires. Our lives are shaped by them. If you

know what a man's real desires are, you know what his real character is.

The season admonishes us to certify ourselves as to what our treasures are, what it is we really care for, what we plan to accomplish, what is our heart's desire. It is still Easter. The Lord is still passing up and down among His own, coming in upon them unexpectedly where two or three are gathered together in His Name. Closed doors are no barriers to Him. Dull ears and sluggish hearts, slow to receive and understand His glorious truth, still exclude not His pity and His grace. It is like our cold and backward spring. The sky is cloudy, the wind is chilling, little patches of snow lie here and there, and there are long streaks of it on the distant hills. And still the spring is here, behind the scene; and all of a sudden, a morning comes when the sun shines in his strength, and the blue sky smiles to his greeting, the last traces of winter melt away, and the birds are here, and we feel the bliss of opening leaves and early verdure. "If ye then be risen . . . seek those things which are above."[1] That seems to be the lesson of these days, of which nature is the parable. And the warning is: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."[2] Even now the Good Shepherd is near at hand. We do not see Him with our bodily eyes; but He sees us, and watches the flow of thought

[1] Col. iii. 1. [2] St. James v. 8.

within us, and whether it sets toward, or away from, Himself.

The season of the Church's year, I say, makes such reflections natural. The fact of the approaching Confirmation[1] makes them timely and needful. For we cannot possibly be neutral and non-committal in God's service. Even to the most thoughtless child, who has had every burden of responsibility so carried for him that he has not yet begun to feel the burden of duty, even to such a one there comes a day and an hour when a choice is pressed upon him, the choice between good and evil, the choice of keeping innocency and an untarnished conscience, or of sacrificing his truth or his honour or his inward purity for some trifling gain, to escape some transient discomfort, or to enjoy some trivial gratification. How the angel of the Lord's Presence waits and watches and yearns and pleads, knowing the inconceivable importance of first steps, the full measure of the consequences of these unknown decisions! For work and warfare are the burden of life. They never end. There is never an hour when it is well or safe to lay aside the yoke of Christ, or to enter into friendly relations with His enemy. The citadel of our highest interests is beleaguered till we die. As in the Psalm, our foes are "on every side, turning their eyes down to the ground."[2] They are vigilant enough.

[1] Confirmation is always administered in the Chapel of St. Paul's School on the evening of Ascension Day.

[2] Ps. xvii. 17.

Their watch is ceaseless. Shall we never have an easy time? Is it worth while to persist in this hard, restricted, governed way of living? Why not take up the proverb of old, as many a one is doing all around us, and so far as we can see with impunity, and say: "Let us break their bonds (the bonds of duty) asunder and cast away their cords (the cords of love) from us"?[1] "Lord, I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid Thy talent in the earth."[2] Let us, then, look upon another side of the picture for a few moments. Let us cheer and comfort ourselves (and reinvigorate our tired energies) with a thought of the *compensations of the Gospel*, of what comes of the right choice, of pains and struggle, and daily, continuous effort, and a resisting, if need be, unto blood, "striving against sin."[3]

For it pays; it does pay. We would naturally suppose so, seeing this is the work and warfare to which God has clearly called us, and made unmistakably our vocation. He Who sets us our task and lays upon us our burden, does not need to be told how weak we are, how prone to temptation, what a struggle it all is, how tired we get. He knows whereof we are made. He also knows the possibilities of our human nature, its marvellous capacities of development, its longings for happiness, the restlessness of desire in every heart.

[1] Ps. ii. 3. [2] St. Matt. xxv. 24, 25. [3] Heb. xii. 4.

He knows the end for which He made us, and to which He fain would lead us, only He leaves us to choose it for ourselves, and follow it of our own free will, not perforce, like driven slaves or unreasoning machines. But even the present compensations, which He has annexed to His service, are precious beyond words to loyal hearts. The sun mounts up with gladdening rays above the eastern sky. "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."[1] It pays. God's wages even in this life are better worth than the wages of the flesh, or the world, or Satan. It pays now, to-day, to be His patient, steadfast, loyal servant. His service even here is perfect freedom.[2]

Take His returns even on the lower side, namely, the life of our bodies. He forbids excess of any kind — over-indulgence of any appetite. He commands self-mastery of even innocent cravings. The great multitude of evil-doers fall by self-indulgence. You know how large a number find the most insignificant temptation of the appetite too much for their honour, their sense of duty, even their common sense. How much disobedience and falsehood are occasioned by the craving for sweets, just as the same order of sins in a man's later life, say, by the thirst for intoxicating drinks! The incipient man desires (and in many cases it is a morbid desire, which a few resolute checks would overcome) some gratification of appetite, something he

[1] Ps. xxx. 5. [2] Collect for Peace.

does not need, and would be better without; but he has never learned to obey, and so has never learned the first principles of manliness. He *must* have it, whatever it is, because he wants it. Indeed, in some instances, the moral condition is morbid also, and the fact that the thing is forbidden adds zest to the indulgence. It is the same kind of temptation which one meets in college, or later on, when a man finds that alcoholic stimulants brace him up for the time being, supply a little artificial strength and courage, make him forget his wrong-doings, deaden his nerves. Suppose the habit of self-indulgence to be already formed. He wants it; he must have it. There are multitudes around him, with the same inclinations, who give way to a greater or less extent; so he is not restrained by public opinion. Often the beastliness of the drunkard is a matter of merriment with his companions. The excess is attended with immediate, present misery, and with after, degrading, ruinous effects; but he never obeyed man, so he has no scruple about disobeying God; and as to self-control, no slave on a plantation was ever so entire a slave as he is to his appetite and his self-will. What has this to do with the compensations of the Gospel? Much. For one who has turned his heart's desire into the channel of God's leadings, has mastered his own foolish propensity to excess,—he can use God's creatures without abusing them. Our appetites are innocent while governed in obedience to God's law.

There is no harm in the pleasure He has Himself attached to their gratification. We might have taken our food with no more enjoyment than when we put in fuel to keep up fire. But God Who loves us has given the pleasure, and He has made it depend largely upon the moderation and mastery we exercise. The excess destroys the pleasure. The very senses are blurred and blunted, and their keenness and delicacy of appreciation are destroyed. The simple, heathful condition of body, the clear eye and complexion, the natural sleep, the unperverted tastes, and freedom from swinish bondage proclaim the blessedness of him who knows where the true treasures lie, and has set himself to seek them. Think of another side of our life here on earth: the inward life of thought. Now, we cannot prevent this inward stream of impressions, imaginings, conceptions, which rush on and through our brains almost spontaneously, often as it seems without volition of ours. We cannot sit with our minds blank, though frequently they might as well or better be blank, for any good that comes of the way they are filled. But the man whose desires are set on good and pure things has an immense advantage over one whose evil propensities bear him on toward vices, and imaginations of vices, so that his lonely or his unoccupied hours are taken possession of by Satan and demons. There cannot possibly be a more miserable creature than he whose thoughts are habitually, you may say instinctively, impure; in whom

a single word or sound, innocent enough to the innocent, starts a whole train of foul ideas; who is learning when by himself to take pleasure in thoughts of wickedness. The corrupt mind is awful company for itself; it is sure to betray itself, whatever its outward restraints and guards, by words of evil, by the growing incapacity for any healthful mental enjoyment, by deeds of darkness when temptation and opportunity combine, such deeds as pollute the body and destroy the soul. Now God gives to the heart, set to obey his Commandments, an ever-increasing flow of innocent and happy thoughts, suggestions of the deepest moral and spiritual interest, kind plans for the welfare and comfort of others, upward-reaching desires, which by and by become hopes stayed on His promises. Such a person is never solitary. He may not be known for what he is by his fellows, his life may seem colourless and undramatic. But he is alive to all noble and honourable and sweet things. Prayers are not dull to him, for he lives by them. The music of hymns and anthems is something more than the gratification of a sensitive and refined ear; they are echoed in his heart. He is himself going forth to war under the banner of the Son of God; it is a real warfare, and not a figure of speech. He is himself hoping one day to be

> Where loyal hearts and true
> Stand ever in the light,
> All rapture, through and through
> In God's most holy sight.[1]

[1] "Paradise," by F. W. Faber.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." I say to those of you who are fully resolved to be on God's side, no matter what your present temptations and poor ways and hindrances (and I would hope that every one of us, without exception, does desire this blessedness, does purpose sooner or later to choose and secure it), I say that it is better to be in the wilderness with our dear and loving Saviour, denying, mastering, vanquishing self and Satan, than to have the full, unrestricted gratifications of sense and time and the world, to be always full fed and pampered, to stand in the world's high places, and grasp its prizes, and have its hollow acclaim. There are better treasures. Most men get to be aware of the fact by hard experience. The apples of Sodom have no flavour. A peaceful conscience is a better treasure than piles of riches doubtfully acquired. A virtuous mind in a body undefiled is cloudless happiness compared to the best results of cold-blooded, sensual indulgence, even where health has not been sacrificed, nor reputation ruined. It pays to love God and fear Him. It pays to fight Satan, to resist evil, to withstand evil men and evil insinuations and to hold fast and unshaken our faith in Christ Crucified, and our loyalty to Him. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Suppose the worst here, much tribulation, constant temptation, perpetual discouragements, things happening all the time which try a person's faith, and suggest hard

thoughts of God, and what use of trying to serve Him and do right, if one gets no credit for, and no exemptions from, trouble and anxious care, yet after all, even in the wilderness, pestered by the tempter, even in the haunts of men, seeing others less scrupulous succeeding in their affairs, and we losing chances because money or popularity is not to be our end, and honest dealing is better with poverty or reproach as the result than great wealth or influence with tarnished honour — it pays to serve God and love Him, and do our duty. Even here, when the day's toil is over — the hard-fought day, the Lord blesses the bed and the rest of His tired and discouraged servant; good angels keep watch around him, nor need one be altogether unconscious of their presence. A little while, and the whole thing is over. "The night cometh, when no man can work."[1] The treasures of the heart are near at hand — there is no disappointment then.

> The world and Satan are o'ercome,
> Before thee gleams eternal light,

and "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."[2]

[1] St. John ix. 4. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

SERMON XVII

OVERCOMING THE WORLD

St. John xvi. 33.

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Human nature rejoices in victory. It hates defeat. Usually the crowd applauds the winning side, and the successful party receives the ovation. The tendency of mankind is to follow the majority whether right or wrong, to swell the louder acclaim, and to mistrust a cause which has few voices to assert, and few stout arms to maintain it. Where the few have won their end and come out conquerors, contrary to the expectation of the world, it is because their several leaders have been so confident of their cause as to feel assured of final triumph. They have refused to be defeated, or outdone; their tenacity and brave endurance have inspired their followers, rallied their fugitives, and encouraged the downhearted, to renew the struggle and gain the day. In any case a cheerful hope is necessary for successful action. Hope is the sunshine of the heart. What one does in depression and discouragement, is likely to be done feebly and listlessly. The brain refuses vigorous effort, and tongue and arms and feet share its paralysis.

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Our Lord said these comforting words on the eve of His agony and shameful death, to a little handful of anxious, dispirited men, in an upper room, in a city where His enemies swarmed and were powerful, and His friends were few and faint-hearted. His cause seemed lost, His mission to be coming to an end in darkness and blood, and with no result. Along with words of heavenly strength and consolation, words of which the true meaning must have been most imperfectly understood at the time by His disciples, came the distinct assertion of coming sorrow and persecution. He does not hide from them the alarming fact that the forces of the world will be against them, that they will be on the down side, so to speak, and hated of all men, for His Name's sake. He tells them, as always, the whole truth, so that they cannot be blinded or flattered as to the future. No words could depict more clearly the rough prospect and the cruel suffering before them. Eleven poor Galileans were they, who had been upheld by expectations of a coming kingdom, a bloodless, glorious victory over the wills of men, a throne set up like that of David, and an affluence of wisdom and material resources like that of Solomon in his palmiest days. What was there now to look to? In a few hours treason would have done its worst, and the appalling roar of a bloodthirsty, frenzied multitude would strike terror into their hearts, and panic fear would put to flight their love and truth and duty. They had made

great promises, they had been endowed with mighty gifts, they had had the one friendship which cannot fail or falter; but for the time it was all to be as though it had not been. By this hour to-morrow night their Master, Who had raised others from the grave, would Himself be dead. And the scars in His Hands and Feet would be those of a malefactor, condemned by the rulers of His own nation and sentenced to the Cross by a heathen Gentile. He would be dead, and His cause dead; and where then the promise of His Kingdom, and the hope, which like a rainbow had spanned their morning sky? With such circumstances of dismay around them, and this prospect of wreck and disaster before them, came these words, like a star flashing forth from a stormy sky: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The words of victory on the eve of defeat, of unquenchable life in the very jaws of death, of strength and assurance just as the enemy laid hold of the worn, enfeebled body, and the physical forces seemed crushed and prostrated forever. "He always wins who sides with God."[1] Our tone of mind in regard to our faith, as well as our individual conduct, is affected by our comprehension of this truth. In this age of restless inquiry, and bold assertion, when every article of the Christian Faith is attacked and every page, nay, verse, in the Holy Scripture scanned and analyzed for the purpose of striking out the super-

[1] F. W. Faber: "The Will of God."

natural, and reducing the Word of God to the level of Homer and Epictetus, when to be liberal may mean to be profoundly indifferent to Divine Truth, and the intolerance of the secular world and press recalls the spirit which made persecutions and martyrs — I say it behooves us as Christians to take heart and be of good cheer, to stand up strongly and resolutely for the Church and the Creeds and the ancient Sacramental worship, and to drop the tone of weakness, and doubt, and apology, no longer to be deferential to those who deny our Lord Jesus Christ, or play fast and loose with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

I mean, first of all, Learn what the Faith is "which was once delivered unto the Saints,"[1] and for which the Apostles died; and you can find it in the three Creeds, and in the ancient Liturgies, just as St. Paul and St. Peter held it. Then, be sure of it; do not doubt or argue about it with sceptics or schismatics or atheists. Leave arguing to those who know their Bibles through and through, and to whom their faith is not like an outside garment to be taken off or put on at pleasure, but is a part of themselves, and that the best part, the result of a living experience. Do not stand by and tamely listen to the well-worn calumnies and sneers and cavils brought up every day by the enemies of the Faith as stoutly and audaciously as though our Blessed Lord had never come to teach us the things of heaven,

[1] St. Jude 3.

as though His Holy Spirit was not here dwelling with His Church, to illuminate and guide it. The sorrowful fact that there are some in the Holy Ministry itself who are misleading interpreters of Divine Truth need surprise no one who reads how, in apostolic times, under the shadow of the Cross, men arose to teach seducing doctrines, and deny the Lord Who bought them.[1] We can afford to be gentle and patient and courteous to those in deadly error; only, let us know that we are, if we hold fast, on the winning side; that beyond the shadow of a doubt we hold the Truth of God, and therefore we have the promise of God to cheer and sustain us, and that we can wait for His Day, and for the manifestation of His Kingdom, "though the earth be moved: and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea."[2] Hear our Master's words: "Be of good cheer." "Stand," as St. Ignatius bade his Christians of old, "stand like an anvil."[3] There are many questions which the scoffing spirit of the age stirs up, which are settled and are not open to debate, and to which we need not attend. Such are the great fundamental facts of the Gospel: that our Lord Jesus Christ is God Incarnate, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God;" that "for us men and for our salvation" He lived and suffered and died, and rose again, and ascended into Heaven,[4] where "He ever liveth to make

[1] *Vide* 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 St. Pet. ii. 1.
[2] Ps. xlvi. 2.
[3] Epistle to Polycarp, iii.
[4] Nicene Creed.

intercession for us,"[1] and from whence He sent His Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity, the "Lord and Giver of Life," to abide with His Church, "to guide it into all truth, and to bring all things to remembrance, whatsoever He hath said";[2] and that the books of the Holy Bible are His Revealed Word, His other witness, in which He speaks, and to which we are bound to "take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark place."[3] All this may be regarded as settled, as foundation truth, to be built upon and lived by, and not to be reopened, and discussed, and gainsaid, any more than in a good home the love of one's mother is a point debatable and something to be argued out with every chance comer. Be sure, if you are thrown into the midst of unbelief and unbelievers, if you cannot help hearing and knowing that these divine truths are scouted and derided every day, be sure they are God's truths, God's facts, indisputable, irrefragable, and be of good cheer and know that they will win the day. Be strong in holding them fast. Reason and conscience, true wisdom and understanding, the experience of life, the unerring instincts of the heart, will all adjust themselves to sustain and verify your convictions. The facts of Revelation have a wonderful correspondence to the facts of our human nature and environment, and they alone present the key to unlock the mysteries of life and time and eternity.

[1] Heb. vii. 25. [2] *Cf.* St. John xvi. 13 and xiv. 26. [3] 2 St. Pet. i. 19.

And, in the second place, bear in mind that the Faith alone supplies the basis, motive, and inspiration of duty; that without it there is no absolute standard of moral conduct; and that with it, abiding in the heart, and made through the Holy Sacraments and other channels of grace our new and true life, no one can be alone or forsaken though he was in a dungeon, without one kindly, sympathizing face to look upon. Be certain of this: that it must always be right to speak and act the entire truth, or, as we repeat in well-chosen words, to be true and just in all our dealings,[1] and that nothing short of this is right, and that no number of the unprincipled and untrue can ever make any form of falsehood right. Though very many in public life lie to obtain votes, and very many in business lie to get money — choose true ways, and be of good cheer and light-hearted about it. To be just and true and temperate and pure is to be on God's side. That gives strength against all the tempters and temptations in the world. Take another instance: If you have made up your mind (and surely it is not unwise to do so) that stimulants of any kind are certainly needless for you, and in all probability injurious, and that even if you are so constituted (and how can you know that you are?) that wine and beer and other things of the kind present little or no temptation, and you are sure of self-mastery — still, for the sake of others, the multitudes who are

[1] Church Catechism.

betrayed into sin and death thereby, you will abstain from their use altogether, at least in the days of your youth and health and vigorous manhood. Be sure you are right. The shallow temper, which makes a jest of drunkenness, is the inspiration of your enemy and God's. For His Word has said and settled it, that no drunkard, any more than fornicator, or adulterer, or effeminate, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.[1] Be of good cheer, and hold fast, though all the young men you know, and the old ones in addition, unite to scoff and sneer, to slight or to persuade you. You are right, and you are on the sure side, and "blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."[2]

But, ah! One may feel that the true difficulty is not so much outside of, as it is within him; that the past record is unsatisfactory; that easy-going ways have weakened one's moral earnestness, and that the power to entertain strong convictions, whether about faith or duty, is greatly weakened within him. Take refuge, in that case, in these immortal words: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Why did He take our feeble human nature into His invincible Godhead but that He might fight our battle with sin, Satan and death, and win the victory once for all, that we henceforth may win in and through Him? How can one get moral purpose?

[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. [2] St. James i. 12.

How can he learn to believe in that which he cannot discern with his bodily senses until he comes to walk by faith and not by sight? By throwing himself in all his weakness wholly upon God. Trust the Lord utterly, just as, if you were drowning, you would trust in the unknown benefactor who threw a rope within your grasp, holding fast to it himself to draw you to the shore.

To-day is called Rogation, that is, asking, Sunday. And you have heard in the Gospel the sure promise: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you."[1] "In the Name of Christ," says St. Augustine, "is signified the right opinion concerning Him"; and "whatsoever ye shall ask," he explains to mean, "everything that is not contrary to everlasting salvation."[2] The three days between this and Thursday are called Rogation, or asking, days. You can easily understand why, when you remember what Thursday commemorates, and how, when our Lord "ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."[3] Let me suggest that those of you who have been instructed the last months for Confirmation, go quietly, as of course, into the chapel, for midday Litany service, in which we beg our Risen Lord to give us what we need, both for soul and body, that we may "be strengthened with might by His

[1] St. John xvi. 23. [3] Eph. iv. 8.
[2] *In Joannis Evangelium*, Tract. lxxiii. 3; cii. 1.

Spirit, in the inner man."[1] Why should not all who were confirmed last year, and who must know that they have not in all ways been loyal to His grace — why should not all the communicants make an effort to be present at these services, and above all at the early Sacrament on Ascension Day, whether they receive or not, with the desire to renew their vows, to recall their past resolutions, and to beg Him, for His love's sake and for their souls' sake, not to cast them away from His Presence, not to take His Holy Spirit from them?[2] Meanwhile, dear friends, let us not look to see who does or who does not prize his opportunities, who does not or who does ask that he may receive. Let us judge ourselves, and not one another. Let us pray for one another. You and I have our parts to fulfil, some quite alone, so far as man sees, in doing it. Just as the Catholic Church, throughout the world, goes on with daily prayers and Creeds and Sacraments, while the storm beats outside and no faithlessness nor misconstruction nor inconsistency nor apostacy of man can impair the integrity of her Faith, nor the witness of her Ministry, nor weaken the certainty of His coming again, Who is her King and Saviour, "when He shall come," as St. Paul testifies, "to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that Day."[3] To adopt, with all humility and

[1] Eph. iii. 16. [2] *Cf.* Ps. li. 11. [3] 2 Thess. i. 10.

reverence, the words of our Apostle: "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."[1]

[1] 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.

SERMON XVIII

THE CROWN OF LIFE

[Revelation ii. 10.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

We celebrate on this day one of the great Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. On this day, our Lord ascended in His Risen and Crowned Humanity, out of the sight of His gazing followers, beyond these visible heavens. His eternal royalty was established at His Resurrection. "His solemn inauguration into this office of King was at His Ascension into Heaven — not but that He was by right a King before, but His full and public manifestation was deferred till then, when 'God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.'"[1] "On His head this day are many crowns," crowns of victory and crowns of royalty, for of all nations He is truly King. This day proclaims Him "King of history, King of life, King of human hearts." On His robe His title is inscribed "King of Kings, Lord of Lords."[2]

[1] Eph. i. 20, 21. [2] Rev. xix. 16.

The title anticipates the final victory. His power is irresistible, His Kingship is universal. He has many crowns for those who serve Him faithfully here, for He has said: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."[1] It would seem that for each one of those whom He has called, and who has obeyed the call, there is a special crown in store. "Behold, I come quickly," is His charge to one, "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."[2] The language is of course figurative. A crown here on earth is a symbol. In Apostolic days, a crown or garland of leaves was the prize of victory in the great games, reproduced and imitated in all parts of what was then the civilized world. It was the emblem of conquest. A victorious general wore it when he entered Rome in triumph, and moved in stately progress with his exulting soldiers to the sacred hill. Made of perishable material it encircled the brows of friends at the social feast, when the day's cares were dismissed, and heart revealed itself to heart in confidence tried and proven. And to-day, the sovereigns of the world have material crowns among the treasures of their kingdoms, as visible signs of national dominion or hereditary rule. As usually in Scripture, a familiar figure is taken and uplifted into a spiritual and heavenly significance. It is a crown indeed, which

[1] Rev. iii. 21. [2] *Ibid.* iii. 11.

is promised the faithful servant; but it is the Crown of Life — just as the earthly probation is called a race; but it is a race commensurate with one's years on earth, and the prize is eternal. Here the Crown of Life is Life. The promise is to him who is "faithful unto death"; to him who overcometh what Christ overcame — the world; overcometh what Christ did not need to overcome — himself. The crown is a victor's, the victory to be achieved now and here; the reward and end of which is life everlasting. We, who have been baptized into Christ, are like soldiers in war time, in a land of foes, beset with foes, holding our various commissions in the host of Christ's Church militant. Here is our opportunity of gaining glory, of gaining life. That transcendent blessedness, which is to follow patient continuance in well-doing, has its foretaste, its prospective crown even here, in the answer of a good conscience, in the quiet and firm discharge of duty, in the clear and settled purpose to render a faithful service. And one may so keep in view his heavenly crown, and know so truly of his heart's desire, that even now the hope becomes a reality, and the life everlasting so begun here in the degrees and participation of grace, that he is hourly upheld and cheered by the vision of glory. Even now a man knows his purpose, whether he means to be wholly faithful, in little as well as great things, whether his allegiance is entire, and his choice absolute. The benediction is a present one: "Blessed

are they that keep His testimonies: and seek Him with their whole heart."[1]

"*Faithfulness unto death*," whether to a person, to a cause, or to both, is a rare grace. So far as man possesses it, he puts off the weeds of his natural weakness, selfishness and instability, and is clothed upon with garments of celestial texture. In its incomplete and distant way, his virtue reflects the unchangeable faithfulness of God. What more or better could one wish for himself than to be "faithful unto death" in his home, his friendships, his chosen calling, his sacred convictions of truth and duty? On whose side would we wish to stand but theirs who have been found faithful, whether over little or much, whether to man or God? In all faithfulness of man to man, however, or to an earthly cause, there enter of necessity earthly elements of incompleteness and disappointment. The faithfulness may be misdirected. One may launch the priceless treasure of his love and faith in an unseaworthy vessel, may stake his all in an unblest cause, or his own self-will and obstinacy may be the buttresses of his fidelity. The cause, in that case, may be one's self. For our motives are subtle and mingled, and mere unwillingness to give up one's way may be the living principle in the apparent loyalty. What our blindness and ignorance demand is just that which has most mercifully been vouchsafed us — a cause repre-

[1] Ps. cxix. 2.

sented by, identified with, a Person Who has the winning power to call out and centre upon Himself our deepest and noblest affections, and the right, not only to solicit but to claim our entire allegiance; faithfulness to Whom, so far from contradicting any lower fidelities to which we are bound, only serves to confirm, refine, and exalt them; being faithful to Whom directs and concentrates all the energies of which we are capable, certainly can never discourage, baffle nor defeat them. No abstract idea, however noble, could call forth in us this tender strength of devoted allegiance. We need something more than a drift which makes for righteousness, or a sentiment of universal philanthropy. Our heart and our flesh cry out for a Person, on Whom to fasten our hope and trust, to be true to Whom is the summary statement of earthly duty, Whose approval is the wages we toil for, the reward we covet, the prize we long to win. Whatever man has become under the disorganizing power of sin, whatever theories we advance for his government in civil society, we feel that in himself as God created him, as recreated in Christ Jesus, the little world within him is a kingdom; that all the powers and ministrations of this kingdom, whether coördinate or subordinate, owe supreme affiance and obedience to One, Who, while, as on this day, He has ascended up on high, and fixed His throne within the inner circle of light unapproachable, at the same time received gifts for men, still has His human Heart, still

extends His hands in blessing over the ransomed earth, still by the power of His effectual intercession, and the prevailing grace of His Spirit, wins men's souls, abides in secret with His faithful ones, fills them with His own hatred of sin and love of holiness, and so refines and purifies their inmost thoughts and intentions that, though in their mortal bodies they dwell on earth, Heaven's attraction draws their real immortal selves, the soul gravitates heavenward, while the body moves on earth, till, in the language of the Collect, "in heart and and mind they thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell."[1]

Jesus Christ and Him crucified, Jesus Christ triumphant over Satan and death, Jesus Christ ascending to His mediatorial throne, Jesus Christ ever living to make intercession for us, is the exalted, the sufficient object of our faith and faithfulness. He is at once the cause and the person to Whom we are called to surrender ourselves, body, soul and spirit, with the certainty that such surrender is at once our highest wisdom and our highest bliss; Whose is the true and real friendship of which the truest friendships here are but the imperfect shadows; Who can never disappoint or fail us; Who here completely fills our expectations, imaginings and longings, awaking after Whose likeness one is satisfied therewith.[2]

"Be," or, as in the Greek, "become faithful unto

[1] Collect for Ascension Day. [2] *Vide* Ps. xvii. 16.

death."[1] In these words, from His Ascension glory, He addressed the poor, struggling, overborne Christians in Smyrna. They were a little company, and the "enemy was daily in hand to swallow them up."[2] On one side of them was a hard, persecuting Judaism, on the other a corrupt and corrupting heathenism, indulgent to every evil appetite and passion, permissive of scepticism, inexorable only to the true Faith and the consistent endeavour to live up to it. Yet this was His bidding, Who had washed them in His own Blood, and won them by the mighty power of His Gospel to confess Him before men. "Faithful unto death" to most of them meant death, real death of the body, and that in its most fearful forms; sometimes prolonged, like St. Paul's long death in life, a dying daily; sometimes brief and sharp, a quick spasm of agony, the appalling cry, the spring, and fangs of a savage beast, or a fierce blast and swelling billow of flame. Great tests to faithfulness, which they bore, following the example of their aged Bishop, of whom we read that Polycarp "by his patience overcame the unrighteous ruler and received the crown of immortality."[3] The tests which try our faithfulness in this day are less palpable and terrifying. Most take upon them the vows of their Baptism, or the vows of a nearer dedication

[1] γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου.

[2] Ps. lvi. 2.

[3] Letter of the Smyrnæans on the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, xix.

in Holy Orders, with encouragement and the God-speed of those who wish them best. Or if the religious life of any must needs be lonely, and in all orders of the Ministry the life must in some degree be a consecrated loneliness, still we have all our brethren in Christ's flock, the whole visible Church, the Saints of all ages, to sympathize with us and bear us company. And yet tests there are, and will be, of our faithfulness; and faithfulness is what the Lord requires of us, not for a year and a day, or while circumstances hedge us in to what one may call the casual performance of duty, but "unto death," unto that complete renunciation of the world and the flesh with all their sinful claims and interests, which may be rightly called a "death unto sin";[1] until that death of the body, when the secret conflicts are over, the long service ended, the evidence of one's faithfulness called in, and He, to Whom in our youth and early manhood we made our vows, sets the seal of His approval on their fulfilment — or from the unfaithful soul, who has broken his plighted word, turns away the loving beams of His Countenance, at once and forever.

"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."[2] If, of all who are baptized into Christ, faithfulness is the sum of their duty, how much more of those who are set apart in Holy Orders to bear the vessels of the Lord! If the regenerate are the first-

[1] Church Catechism. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 2.

fruits of the world, then the ministers of Jesus Christ are the first-fruits of the regenerate. "This one thing I do," says the holy Apostle, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[1] These words of the Holy Ghost express the aim, aspiration, and effort of the faithful minister always pressing upward, always ascending higher and higher in the Life of God. To aim at any mark or measure below the highest is to fall short of our vocation. "Ascend or descend we must." As a great Father says: "No man is certain that he is good who does not desire to be better; and where you begin to be unwilling to become better, there you begin to cease to be good." The chief test of faithfulness, as with all men, so preëminently with Christ's threefold ministry, is applied to personal character, to the controlling purpose as displayed in the currents of one's thoughts, words, and occupations, his daily conformity to the Divine will, his devotion to the glory of His Ascended Lord. One of us is now about to do what many have done before him, from St. Stephen's day to this; what we ourselves, who are in orders, in our time have done, to take upon him, "by the inward moving of the Holy Ghost, this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory and the edifying of His people."[2] To that end he promises

[1] Phil. iii. 13, 14. [2] Office for the Ordering of Deacons.

to shape his studies, and his teaching, and all his engagements to that end, "to make himself, as much as in him lies, a wholesome example to the flock of Christ."[1] And with this sacred promise on his lips and purpose in his heart, he bows his neck to receive the yoke of Christ's nearer service, and the Gift which will enable him to bear it. Can there be a nobler or more fitting dedication? Can any vow be dearer or more binding? There is no work so glorious in which man can engage as God's work. There is no obligation so weighty and constraining as that which this promise imposes. "*Summa dicere ima facere.*" Can one think of the possibility of that without horror and awful apprehension? For to be faithful as Christ's deacon or priest is "to apply all one's diligence to frame and fashion his own life according to the doctrine of Christ,"[2] to illustrate those holy precepts in our own daily guidance which we teach to others. "Take heed," is St. Paul's charge to St. Timothy; "take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine."[3] To thyself first, that thou mayest live the doctrine, and know it, not by the intellectual perceptions only, but by thine own experience, the knowledge which blesses one's self first, and by which one speaks out of the abundance of his heart. For no activities of outward work can compensate for the lack of inward holiness. No care of the flock will excuse the minister from the care of his own soul. "Let no man," says

[1] Office for the Ordering of Deacons [2] *Ibid.* [3] 1 Tim. iv. 16.

St. Paul again to the young man he loved, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."[1] All the eloquence in the world is not as eloquent or persuasive as a holy life. What was the secret of the power of the holy Apostles? Of course they had the continued and supernatural inspiration of the Holy Ghost; but they had also what we may have, an overpowering sense of the truth of what they uttered. "Their whole soul, intellect, conscience, heart, and will went with every word." They who had stood on Calvary and watched the long, awful hours of suffering, they who had seen their Master after He rose from the dead, and received His instructions about the Kingdom of God, who had stood gazing on Olivet as He slowly rose from among them, and with words of blessing ascended from their sight, or who, like St. Paul, had been blinded by His glory, so long as life lasted must have been penetrated in every faculty and sense and fibre with the Presence and the Love of Jesus. They must have desired a hundred languages and voices and tongues to declare all day long the glory of the Resurrection and the peace of the Kingdom of God. And we, too, who receive the grace of Orders, can so meditate upon these things and give ourselves wholly to them, that out of the fulness of the heart the mouth will speak, in our poor measure, as they did, "that

[1] 1 St. Tim. iv. 12.

which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life."[1] And it is this sort of living faith which alone, in this godless, critical, materialistic age, can successfully confront and overcome the world. Holiness, to match and overcome the godlessness. Implicit belief, unquestioning acceptance of the Creeds and teachings of the Catholic Church, to be enabled to help and save the myriads all around us, whose first words are, "I deny." Freedom from earthly trammels, from the secret desire for money, or ease, or personal settings, or popularity, that we may really trample in a spiritual war upon the things of sense, and live in and for the place where Christ has gone. This faith alone, a faith which discards all makeshifts and compromises, and speaks with authority, as the Head of the Church, through the Holy Ghost, dictates — this faith, which comes from holy living, and unceasing prayer and Communion, will enable him who holds it, and manifests it, and is its mouthpiece, to face the world and sin and Satan, and to "seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ forever."[2] And the growth of this faith in us, which alone can make us able ministers of the New Testament, "rightly dividing the word of truth,"[3] which alone can enable

[1] 1 St. John i. 1. [2] Office for the Ordering of Priests. [3] 2 St. Tim. ii. 15.

one in any rank of the ministry to "be faithful unto death," must begin, continue, and end in prayer. Prayer only can open one's eyes to the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Prayer, therefore, is our best teacher. Really to commune with God, to draw inward strength and pardon and illumination from the fountains of grace which He has opened to us, to commit to Him, day by day, hour by hour, the work and charge He has given; and however little that may seem in the eyes of men, it is great enough for Angels, since it is the work He assigns to us. This is better than to stand to-day with the men of Galilee, straining our eyes to see our Prince and King as He rises in His Heavenly Majesty, and the skies bow down to meet Him, and the clouds hasten to become His chariot. For by faithful continuance in prayer, we shall be enabled to hold fast to the end, and to be "like unto men that wait for their Lord, . . . that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."[1]

In taking these words for my text to-day, my dear friend and younger brother, while I have been preaching to myself first, as well as to all others here, who by solemn vows and obligations are held fast to their God and Saviour, I have thought chiefly of you, of giving you a keynote, so to speak, in words divine, for all your future life and ministry — words which shall be a

[1] St. Luke xii. 36, 37.

perpetual admonition, incentive, and encouragement. If I were asked to characterize your past life since I first knew you in your boyhood, what had been the leading trait to give it uniformity and aim, I should use this blessed word of "faithful." You have been one of the loyal hearts and true in this place, from your earliest connection with it, my friend and helper, carrying out with all steadfastness here the holy and precious lessons which were first instilled at home. They to whom you owe most are with you to-day, one in person, the other, be sure, in spirit, with an added joy, even in her sacred, blissful rest, at this fruition of her prayers and teachings and example. Is it not even now something like a crown to have attained thus far; with all one's felt and acknowledged deficiencies and infirmities, still to thus set the seal to one's past, by this vow which binds to a higher consecration, a more devoted faithfulness in the future? "Be thou faithful unto death." "Make full proof of thy ministry."[1] Believe that lowly duties diligently performed are tasks angelic, when set by our Ascended Lord, and done simply for Him. And when He comes again in like manner as to-day we see Him go into Heaven, and all the living and the dead wait with trembling hearts to hear their final sentence, may he say to you, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thy toils are over, thy work is accepted, the imperishable crown, the Crown of Life, is thine!

[1] 2 St. Tim. iv. 5.

SERMON XIX

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

PSALM XCVI. 9.

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness"

THERE are three thoughts which these words suggest, and which make them suitable for this great Day of Pentecost, which is the third great Festival of the universal Church.

I. The first is that God the Holy Ghost, Who "came down as at this time from heaven, with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the Apostles, to teach them, and to lead them into all truth,"[1] to abide thereafter with them and their successors to the end of time, is the same Almighty Spirit, whose influences have from the beginning filled and glorified the natural world; that the great book of nature is His, just as the Bible, the great Book of Revelation, is; and that, as St. Paul told the men of Lystra: "He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."[2] "The sea is His, and He made it."[3] We come to know God in manifold ways. We

[1] Proper Preface for Whitsun Day. [2] Acts xiv. 17. [3] Ps. xcv. 5.

learn from this outward loveliness and glory of nature that the Holy Spirit of God is the author of light, and order and beauty — "the Lord and Giver of Life,"[1] of the life which diversifies and irradiates every hillside and valley, as well as of the life, which is implanted, a seed of heavenly power, in the hearts of the children of God. The harvest of a quiet eye and a thoughtful soul is gleaned every day, as one goes to and fro, and sees and hears the wholesome, refreshing sights and sounds with which the earth in her seasons is replenished. As, at the beginning of creation, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,"[2] and worked His glorious will by means of material forces and agencies more than man has discovered or divined, so, in the operations of nature ever since, in the marvellous manifestations of will and design to be seen around us, "He maketh His angels spirits; and His ministers a flaming fire."[3] As the Psalmist sings: "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of Glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters."[4] As the great machinery in a factory, working as if self-moved, and frequently in minor parts self-adjusting, goes on with a simultaneous movement, and no human agency is at the moment visible, neither he from whose busy brain it sprung, nor he whose hand starts and controls its present action, so in this multitudinous, marvellous natural world, the

[1] Nicene Creed.
[2] Gen. i. 2.
[3] Ps. civ. 4.
[4] *Ibid.* xxix. 3.

various intricate and complicated movement goes on in a majestic silence, and the stars in their courses, the earth in its orbit, the little bird on its nest, and the tiny flower which, multiplied by tens of thousands, gives the flush of colour and life to the meadow, alike proceed from the loving Spirit of God, and depend upon Him to uphold and direct the modes and processes of their being. In the wonderful vision of Ezekiel, the inner life of the natural world was unveiled to him. The forces at work around us stood forth, as living creatures, which "ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."[1] Even in those, which seemed most uniform and mechanical, which were represented by wheels, the prophet saw that "when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up."[2] And "the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels."[3] The visible world is thus made an endless delight and an endless study. Nature becomes a veil and a shadow of things unseen and eternal. "The works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."[4] Love God's world, therefore; cultivate the tastes and perceptions which make you sensitive to its endless beauties. Love it as God's. Only pure and high thoughts come from "mountain hoary, winding shore, and deepening

[1] Ezek. i. 14.
[2] *Ibid.* 19.
[3] *Ibid.* 20.
[4] Ps. cxi. 2

glen."[1] Humility and guarded speech and careful attention befit a true student. These make the study of nature a bulwark and correlative to faith. Thus one may ascend from the world natural to the world spiritual, until "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead."[2]

II. And the second thought is, that, as in nature, so in the New Creation, which is the Visible Church and Kingdom of our Lord on earth, God the Holy Ghost dwells and abides. "As truly and as personally as God Incarnate was on earth, eighteen centuries ago, so, ever since Pentecost, the Holy Ghost has been with us." "There has been among us ever since, the Personality of a Sacred Being." "This is the mystery in the Body of Christ," says a good writer, "that God is in the midst of us, walking up and down with us, as Jesus Christ did in Jerusalem or Bethany." The text connects the thought of this Presence with the external acts of worship by which we seek to honour the Triune God. We are to worship Him "in the beauty of holiness;" and holiness comes to sinful man and belongs to the thoughts and words of sinful man only through the agency of the Holy Spirit of God. "God is a Spirit," as our Lord taught the poor woman of Samaria,

[1] "The Christian Year:" "The First Sunday after the Epiphany."
[2] Rom. i. 20.

"and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."[1] The words are perverted and misapplied, if made to imply that man is to worship with the spirit only, and not with the body and the feeling soul also. Our Lord means that we should worship the Father with the honest heart and the surrendered will. But the Beauty of Holiness includes all that is noble and impressive in outward worship—stately buildings, the finest use of colour and material, the gifts and resources of human genius and art, music and carving in wood and stone and metal, flowers, and embroidered work, and reverent care and judgment in their use. Man's noblest faculties are nobly exercised in preparing temples for the worship of the Most High and in studying the details of the worship itself. As in the wilderness, when the tabernacle was preparing, we are told of the chief worker, Bezaleel: "The Lord hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work."[2] We may well believe, therefore, that in those devouter ages, when men offered willingly to the Glory of God and effaced self, so that the names of architects and donors are unrecorded, the glorious churches, which have stood, some of them, a thousand

[1] St. John iv. 24. [2] Exod. xxxv. 31-33.

years, many longer than Solomon's temple; the hymns whose writers are unknown, like that which belongs to this day, "*Veni Creator Spiritus*," attributed to the Emperor Charlemagne, though unquestionably as old as St. Gregory the Great; strains of music which draw the feeling heart to heaven from earth, have proceeded from, and been aided by, that Holy Spirit, Who dwells among us, and by Whose Almighty power within these temples the miracles of the Faith are continually wrought; by Whom souls are born into Christ's kingdom at the Font, are renewed by His strength in the Laying on of Hands, and are fed perpetually with that Food which cometh down from Heaven, even the Body and Blood of Him Who giveth Life unto the world. "The failure does not lie in these great realities, it is because we do not yield ourselves to their power." "Why are we so earthly? Why are we kept down grovelling on the earth? Because we do not yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit. Because we do not realize the glories of our position, nor apprehend with holy exultation the supernatural glories amidst which we live and move."

III. And the third and closing thought is that the Holy Spirit is the author of the beauty of personal holiness in any individual life. All goodness comes from Him, all permanent beauty of character. The saints are saints, because He has taken full possession of them. He has made their minds beautiful, and filled

them with all illuminating, uplifting, helpful thoughts. He has made them simple and unselfish, and to love plainness and lowly places, and to desire no earthly fame, and to set their feet upon the world. He has made their lives beautiful by daily sacrifices and continual thought for others, by stainless purity, or that stream of penitential tears in which, through the cleansing efficacy of the Precious Blood, past stains are washed away. He has made clear to them the inherent ugliness of sin, of all sin, the evil stamp that pride, and ambition, and recklessness and falsehood mark on the very countenance as well as on the secret life, which is the man. For what beauty is there in anything evil? In insolence or ungentle manners, in unfeeling, blasphemous speech, and unbridled indulgence of fleshly appetites, or in irreverent, indevout ways in the very presence-chamber of the Lord? Even a refined taste objects to these and finds them repulsive and uncongenial and out of place. How much more must the Spirit of gentleness and truth and love and purity — He, Who is heard in the "still, small voice,"[1] Who is likened to a dove "that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold,"[2] Who speaks to tender consciences the sweet words of instruction and approval, Who is found of them that tempt Him not; and sheweth Himself unto such as do not distrust Him. "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

[1] 1 Kings. xix. 12. [2] Ps. lxviii. 13.

Let us ask the Ever-Blessed and Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, to take away from us all self-will, to give us homely virtues, to drive away our doubts and contentions, to make us of one mind in an house, and to give us that clear discernment and purified taste, that we shall admire only what is worthy to be admired, and never mistake licence for liberty, or bluster for manliness, or unscrupulous assertion for the accents of truth. For His gifts are the only ones to set our hearts upon; and patience and discipline and holy watchfulness will draw Him near, and keep Him with us, until His work in us is perfected, and step by step we pass from the loveliness and glory of this natural world, to the beauty and the sweetness of His spiritual service in His courts below, and thence, in His good time, to the Land of Righteousness, where He liveth and reigneth, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."[1]

[1] Rev. xxi. 4.

SERMON XX

MY SOUL HANGETH UPON THEE

PSALM lxiii. 8.

"My soul hangeth upon Thee; Thy right hand hath upholden me."

THERE is a helpful use of the imagination. We may call upon it to aid us in laying out the work of our lives, or rather in laying that basis of principle which gives ground for hope that our work, whatever it is, will, some of it, be lasting. Try to make such use of this gift of God now. Imagine one of you who have been scholars here during this last year coming back fifty years hence — in 1939 — to see the scenes where several years of his life were passed, and those, as he would then realize, by no means the least important. Of course, I ask you to prop your imagination with the hope and confidence that the School itself may live and grow stronger with the flight of time; that while many outward features are changed, still some landmarks will remain. This holy place, for example, mellowed by the lapse of years, its tower completed, the windows filled with storied panes, a glorious reredos in its proper place, the Saints of all ages looking down from window, niche, and screen, or gathered above the altar

around their Lord, their strength and refuge. It is the last Evensong of the last Sunday of the term. The bells chime out melodiously, and the long file of boys and vested choir of masters and clergy enters. With curious, mingled sensations he, who to-day sits here a lad, but then a man, with a large experience of life, whose struggle is nearly over, looks on, and, as he looks, almost loses the present in the past so far away. Again he hears the organ's glorious voice, and the old prayers and psalms said by strange lips, in tones that are strange to him. He strains his eyes and memory along the seats and stalls, and beyond the chancel arch, but sees not one face of all so familiar to him now. He pauses and thinks of this one and that one, gone; their roll of life ended and folded up and laid away. One lies in the bed of ocean, the graveyards through the land hold of most of the others the mouldering dust. Several of the younger here, he afterwards may learn, are still, with whitening hair and ripening wisdom, carrying on the work. Several in older manhood, it may be (God grant it!), are doing His work in the Church in high or lowly office, in parts of the world still unwon to Christ, or in those nearer home, where what is known by multitudes of saving truth only becomes their condemnation. He will think of some he knew here who had started life poorly and inadequately, and then, by God's grace, remembered their better lessons, and turned to Him with all their hearts; and of others who still went

on reckless of good, neither hearing nor heeding the warning voice, and of whom none may say, "Their witness is in Heaven, and their record is on high." [1] But of the larger number of those who are gathered here to-day the history of their earthly lives will by that time be over. Cold hearts and tender hearts, the corrupt body and the body undefiled, will alike be wasting away as fast as the action of natural forces can waste them; only the spirits will live on, and fifty years hence will be as living and as conscious of their identity as is each one at the present moment. Suppose this visitor to have drawn the obvious inferences from the experience of life. It will occur to him that some stay is needed for a man in presence of this fact of continual decay and change, something to compensate for the losses, to uphold and secure one amid such shocks and disasters of time. It is no consolation to know that these earthly bodies will, after a little, be taken up and distributed through the material universe, and find their involuntary perpetuation in grasses and vapours, in trees and meadow flowers. Where meanwhile is the part to be that never dies? — that in us which lives and loves, and does not and cannot forget? Is there nothing to hold by, when all men have forgotten that such a being as I ever was? Is there no memory in which I may live on, save that which is now registering, though unheeded, all my neglects of duty and all my misdeeds?

[1] Job xvi. 19.

Our visitor (you will remember he is one of you), with fifty years added to his mental and physical development, goes back in thought to what he himself has known and observed. He has had his share of what is called pleasure, social enjoyments and distinctions, gayeties and sights, and keen physical excitement, and gratification of the senses, ease and travel, books and pictures and art, the love and appreciation of which is in so many cases a mere sham and pretence. What comfort or relief comes from these delights, when the real storms break and the spirit is thrown back upon itself for peace and inward satisfaction? What support will even the more innocent and less selfish pleasures give, when the body, the link between our true selves and this outer world, lies a wreck on the graveyard shore, and the immaterial world here becomes the real one, and our only fellowship is with good and holy spirits, or with spirits of evil? Suppose one to have been greatly favoured in the accumulation of riches. It requires ability in a man to amass wealth, and there is an intellectual gratification in planning and succeeding in its acquisition. And its possession counts in the world; it gives power and worship among men. Its right and wise use enrolls one among the benefactors of mankind. Its accompaniments may do much to ennoble and exalt one, if not perverted to merely selfish ends. But the richest of men comes to a moment when all that wealth can purchase is worthless to him.

Even now, it never wins true love and loyalty, but is rather a stumbling-block to these, and in the hour of death it avails nothing, nor gives one courage or covert for the exigencies of that new and untried existence. It may make it harder to leave this world, but it does not help one in doing so. And as to honour and position among men, this is the conclusion at which a really great man arrived: "Years fly swiftly, and it is full time to be reasonable, and to look on life no longer dazzled by the sunbeams of youth. Let us be just towards God. He has not created men that they may attain celebrity, a thing which few ever reach, or care for when they have reached it. God knows the littleness of the world too well to give His creatures so poor an aim as that. He created the stars in order to disgust us with it. Glory is the illusion of childhood and of some men who never quite grow out of childish ways. A soul really capable of glory does not think about it; he is too great for that." So muses the man of nearly seventy years, as he revisits the scenes of his boyish failures or successes. Where are those whom he knew in these far-off days? What has been the issue in this and the other world of these lives? Of their training here and elsewhere for good or evil? Did they sow to the flesh, of the flesh to reap corruption? Or, with all mistakes and hindrances, to the spirit, to reap life everlasting?[1] For surely as men sow, they reap, and none can think that pleasures

[1] *Vide* Gal. vi. 7 and 8.

or riches or honours or any other earthly props will stand the sweep and pressure of Eternity.

And now I come back to the blessed and strong words of the Psalmist: "My soul hangeth upon Thee: Thy right hand hath upholden me." Let us suppose him, whom I have imagined of your number, coming back after the passage of half a century and sitting once more a member of a congregation altogether new to him, to whom he is little more than a shadow; let us suppose him one who has really chosen the better part, whose heart the Lord hath touched, and so to have treasured up the great teachings of Providence and time as to know something in his own experience of the rest and confidence of the servant of God. Whatever else changes, this has not changed. The Faith of the Gospel, and the power which flows from it. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."[1] God's righteousness is like the strong mountains, and His judgments as the everlasting hills.[2] And the soul that hangeth upon God holds to that which cannot be removed, though the night be black, and the winds high and the stars withdraw their shining.

Let me ask you, who are here together for the last time to hear words of instruction from this place, to project your thoughts fifty years forward, and ask what you are planning, and how you are making ready for the passage of these years, for the death which lies

[1] Heb. xiii. 8. [2] *Cf.* Ps. xxxvi. 6, and Gen. xlix. 26.

beyond or along their track; for the old age which strips one, if he reaches it, of most of those resources of forgetfulness which youth and animal spirits are so ready to appropriate and misuse. A little wise forecast is timely. What can make any one of you, no matter how poor and unworthy his past, hopeful of his future, able to resist and conquer his temptations, to repel and live down his doubts, and so to accept and fulfil his Christian calling, that God will forgive and receive him both now and forever? Surely nothing but to take God at His Word, to fear Him, to make duty to Him the basis and the crown of all one's work and planning; not to argue with the fallacies of the world and evil men, whether they concern God's truth or the service and duty which He enjoins; simply to "keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right."[1] This is a great strength, and makes a man steadfast and calm, no matter what his worries and vexations; and this "shall bring him peace at the last." Let me mention two lying sayings, with which the enemy of your souls through the mouth of evil companions will seek to betray you. One is, "They all do it." It may be profanity, or impurity, or cheating at lessons, or cheating in Wall Street, or desecrating the Lord's Day, whatever it is which makes us sin. He suggests that we sin in good company, that this is the way of the little world we live in; that nobody is able to stand right and

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 38.

true; and that that sin cannot be so bad, to which everybody gives way. Of course it is always a lie. Perhaps by your very side stands some one you do not know, who is true and staunch, "who has sworn and steadfast means," who never utters a careless word, nor has committed an impure act, who is noble and trustworthy in the presence of a crowd of weaklings. But if it seems to you, in your tried moments, true that all men do deny your Master, still what matters it? It is glorious in one's steadfast, unswerving purpose to hold fast by God, and to stand, if so be, alone with Him. Let your soul hang upon Him, and His right hand will uphold you. And the other lying word is: "No one else does it," and that has reference chiefly to daily prayers, and reading of Holy Scripture, to Church going, and Sacraments — using, that is, the means of spiritual life and health and salvation. And here again the circle, in which a man may happen to be at a given time in his life, is after all a limited one. There are myriads of other circles extending around him on every side, and every here and there are some of that seven thousand who have not bowed to the image of Baal,[1] who walk heart free from the godlessness and carelessness of the world; who kneel like Daniel,[2] three times a day, whether men know it or not, with faces turned toward the Heavenly Jerusalem, and lit with the hope of glory. "No one else does it." "What of that? I do it," the

[1] *Vide* 1 Kings xix. 18. [2] Dan. vi. 10.

true heart replies. "Do it? Aye, and will do it as long as I have my being. For 'my soul hangeth upon God,' well do I know it, 'and Thy right hand hath upholden me.'"

The hour has passed. The Evensong is over. The blessing has been spoken. For the last time the file of boys and men passes out through the chapel doors, the last strains of the organ in their ears, sounding like an appeal from the souls who have run their race, and are waiting for their final award. But the story of these lives here is not yet ended, and for you the Lord is waiting, and in your hearts His Spirit stirs, and cries, and listens, and renews the old unchanging and unchangeable lessons.

Whether you are blest or not, is in your hands. The truth and grace of God outlive the faithlessness and folly of men.

Who lives forlorn
On God's own word doth rest:
His path is bright
With Heavenly light,
His lot among the blest.[1]

[1] "Sintram and His Companions," De la Motte Fouqué.

SERMON XXI

THE PURE IN HEART

St. Matthew v. 8.

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

The Bible is full of blessings — blessings on men's past, blessings conditioned on their future. Our Lord came to us loaded with blessings. His Kingdom, into which we are baptized, is one of blessing even in its earthly state; looking into and preparing for a future of blessedness. When He opened His sacred lips to teach men, He began with blessings. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and "they that mourn," "the meek and the merciful."[1] The Bible is itself a treasury of blessings. And when we think, on the last Sunday morning of a year like ours, of what to say once more to those so soon to be scattered, never again all of us to reunite in this sacred place or join in common prayer, it is in one's heart to bless, to say a great blessing which may be availing in years to come, a blessing, which first spoken by our Saviour and best Friend, has His undying truth within it, and which must therefore win acceptance and fulfilment. And the Lord's blessings hold throughout

[1] St. Matt. v. 3–7.

time; they are always being fulfilled. "Blessed, to-day, are those that are undefiled in the way; and walk in the law of the Lord."[1] For some here, therefore, we humbly trust such blessings do overspread their years. They have been pure in heart, that is, the will has been free from taint of evil aim. When conscience has spoken, they have tried to obey it; the memory is without stain of indulged vicious thought; there is no record of such shames as good men neither speak nor allow themselves to think of. To be pure in heart covers more than simply freedom from uncleanness. It means singleness of purpose, that simplicity and directness of aim which "tramples down and casts aside the baits of pleasing ill," because the heart is set upon something higher and better. When the eye of the soul is undimmed, the spirit within can obtain some clear view of the things of the Spirit of God. A clear vision of duty is a great step toward the Vision of God. And to have such clear vision, one must keep always the steadfast purpose to do duty. A divided will, an effort to look two ways, loses the connection. There is no certainty of action where there is a painful uncertainty of purpose.

By the heart here is meant the seat of the desires and affections, the seat and centre, therefore, of our personal life. Here it is that the personal life of man in all its relations is concentrated; the conscious and uncon-

[1] Ps. cxix. 1.

scious, the voluntary and involuntary, the physical and spiritual impulses and emotions. Desires cherished with consciousness, and expressed with will, are ascribed in Scripture to the heart. It is clear that the entire, undivided person must share, therefore, in that which it is to perform from the heart. The heart, accordingly, represents the proper character of the person. "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded,"[1] says St. James, because the heart cannot be pure while its desires are divided. It is the heart, with which man believeth unto righteousness. True love is to love with a pure heart fervently. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh."[2] "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."[3] In Ananias's great sin it is the heart which is at fault. "Why," exclaims St. Peter, "hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."[4] To be "pure in heart," therefore, is something more than the absence of some special form of sensual sin. It excludes every element of baseness, envy and hate and covetousness, as well as that worst and lowest which we mean by impurity. That indeed has so overshadowed the others that it claims most our efforts at resistance. Its taint is deepest, most pervasive, and deadliest. It most effectually darkens the understanding and shuts out the Light of God. But so does any

[1] St. James iv. 8.
[2] St. Matt. xii. 34.
[3] Prov. iv. 23.
[4] Acts v. 4.

indulged sin, any cherished purpose, which conflicts with our baptismal vow, or impairs our perfect sincerity in God's service. Let us consider a few moments, therefore, the conditions of the blessing, and then try to uplift our thoughts to the blessing itself.

I. For the direction of the desires and affections defines the state of the heart, and the state of one's heart is simply his character, not as it appears to men, but as viewed by God. If our desires and affections point to goodness, and His favour, then our hearts are right in His sight, in proportion to the fulness and perfection of this aim. The more eager and enthusiastic our desires for that which He commands, and our love for what He has promised, the steadier the current of our being flows towards Him, the better we are. Now, what mars and divides this singleness of aim is sin; and one sin will do it. One wilfully cherished sin will spoil our lives. Take the one the most opposite to the blessing — that of impurity. You know in your own experience, some of you, how radical this sin is; how to indulge the thoughts and images of vice roots out the good purpose and better feeling in you; how it enfeebles the will for any good effort; how, if admitted and encouraged, impure desires destroy your honourable ambitions, and for the time being clog your prayers. And if any of you have gone on to delight in the evil speech unabashed, to tell one another the vicious tale, or to use almost as a habit the expressions and allusions

of the corrupt and shameless, you can recall how powerless the words become of any one on the side of God and virtue; how the sweet songs of Zion fall on listless ears, and the music of the Gospel loses its subduing charm. For those whose unclean thoughts and words lead to secret acts, or to any form of indulgence of their evil propensities, the deafness and the dulness to all things lovely and of good report becomes its own punishment. Look at the stolid faces, the weak and vacillating expression, the furtive glances, the sodden or the flushed complexions, the hard, bold brows of those whose lives are ruined by such sin. Observe the coarse, loud laugh, the whispers and the looks of mutual understanding, the quick scent for filthiness, the absence of self-respect and noble manhood. I say nothing of God's penalties for such careers — the abused, degraded body, the horrid forms of disease, life without interest or honour, death often premature, without repentance. This is the culmination of those beginnings of impurity, of which they, who know anything, will recognize the truth, that, in their earlier stages, they enfeeble the will, and turn one from all steadfast, effectual effort to do his duty to God. Or take another sin, less glaring, but equally destructive of purity of purpose, namely, unbelief. I will not say that there is not an honest unbelief, which may come upon a man without moral fault of his own, because of inadequate early training, the circumstances in which he is placed, and the peculiar

constitution of his mind; but it is far more rare than is commonly supposed. Most unbelief among those who have had some right religious teaching comes of neglect. They have learned their creeds, and know a little of their Bibles; but the Divine truth has not really taken hold of them. They go through certain great acts of religion, but without much reality of prayer, without the full and conscious surrender of heart and mind to do the will of God. Most likely prayers and religious duties are performed perfunctorily. God does not really enter into such lives, for they forget His Presence, and their daily proceedings are without reference to His pleasure. By and by, when thrown among the godless, or those whose religion is only nominal, the forms of prayer are neglected, the Holy Scripture seldom or never read, the past knowledge becomes obsolete, because never called into use, and thus, the grace once given, the soul's priceless treasure and sheet-anchor, is wasted, or slighted and forgotten. Unbelief therefore has practically set in before an honest doubt is suggested. Naturally, therefore, when the mind, inexperienced and unpractised in Divine things, is confronted with the bold speculations of the day, it accedes to the first superficial difficulties that present themselves. The soil is ready for doubts and objections. For it must be remembered that the internal evidence of the Christian religion is the strongest. Able men answer in succession every one of the sceptical arguments, as

they appear, many of them being merely old objections recast, and fair and serious minds are satisfied by the answers. But, after all, what difference does it make, unless one is personally interested in admitting the claims of the Gospel upon himself, unless to follow Christ means giving one's own heart to Him, to love and obey Him. Christ is satisfied with nothing short of this. As He said, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"[1] It is the daily living it, which best proves to oneself the truth of the Gospel. Only by the habit of daily prayer, by obedience to His precepts, by constant using, and dependence upon His grace, and looking forward to, and rejoicing in, His promises, does one arrive at that inward certainty, against which sneers and smart sayings rattle, like hail on the housetop, and which resolves the hard questions and insoluble problems which fill the air, with our Lord's assurance to St. Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shall know hereafter."[2] A single-minded purpose to do God's will, a conscious direction of one's whole being in the path of His commandments, makes the heart pure to see God, to know his truth, as they know things who penetrate into their inner life, and know them, not as most of us know one another, from without, but from within.

II. And now, what is this blessing which is laid up

[1] St. Luke vi. 46. [2] St. John xiii. 7.

for the pure in heart, which is theirs even now, "in part," though, "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away?"[1] It is to see God. It follows the analogy of His other blessings, that the fulfilment of this promise begins here and now. Those who are altogether blind to Him here, are not likely to attain this vision, of a sudden, when their spirits leave their bodies at death, or when soul and body are reunited in the resurrection. We are to walk by faith indeed, and not by sight. Yet as the Lord when on earth opened the eyes of the physically blind, so He opens day by day the eyes of the soul through the agencies of His Spirit. There are ways by which He manifests Himself to pure hearts every day and hour they live, and makes Himself all but visible, in the traces of His handiwork, and the illumination of His truth. We are told in the Old Testament how "the heavens declare" His glory, and "one day telleth another."[2] God is in the natural world around us, and the natural world is a revelation of Him, so far as a material type or similitude can be. The revelation is indeed only in broken gleams and vanishing hints, but still, as a great writer has said, He has created in nature "a universal language about Himself; its features convey signals from a distant country." The beauties and the wonders which we see are the veil of those which are deeper and more exalted. What our eyes look upon are a symbol of the

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10. [2] Ps. xix. 1, 2.

promise: "Thine eyes shall behold the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."[1] And what you can all understand, even the youngest, is this, that the lovely things in the world we live in and their sweet and joyful teachings are shut out from the bad, the selfish, and unbelieving. The heart must be clean and free from itself, really to see God in nature's beauty and be drawn on to love and adore Him. In proportion as you who hear me are really good and true, and mean to be, with your whole hearts, will you understand what I say. How can one with a low and vicious turn of mind, which ferrets out and dwells upon foul, unwholesome things, have any real appreciation of God's sunlit glories? How can a materialist and an unbeliever find anything more in this mysterious world than a great cave, in which he can collect specimens of other varieties of matter, though, since he and all men end at death, no good can come of such collecting? For life without God is sunless, and the figure of Scripture contains all I have been saying: "Walk as children of light; . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."[2] If you have the light of God in your hearts, you will see His light reflected in the world around you, and will rejoice in it; but not otherwise. Or to turn to His written Revelation. The Bible is a sacrament of God. He speaks to us in it. The diligent student discovers

[1] Is. xxxiii. 17. [2] Eph. v. 8, 11

its unity of purpose, and modern research has thrown great light upon its antiquities. But the humblest person who can read the Scriptures in no language but his own, who does "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,"[1] whose one desire is to "draw nigh to God, that He may draw nigh to him,"[2] sees more of its real truth as God's revelation of Himself than one with learning sufficient to address himself to its revision, without a loving, humble, believing heart. For to see God is to know Him, not merely to know that He is, but to know Him in our hearts and lives as ours, "Who holdeth our soul in life, Who suffereth not our feet to slip,"[3] Who "is about our path and about our bed: and spieth out all our ways,"[4] Whose favour is better than life itself. How can one care for God's Word, who has no set purpose to obey it? or wish to read it, if his heart is full of base desires? We see God in His Word, when we mean to obey God. "If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the doctrine."[5] And the same holds true of seeing God in His Providence, His ordering of individual lives, and human history, and the events which control mankind. Even more does the seeing Him in His Church, and all the blessed ways and ordinances of His Church, depend upon the pure heart, the entire consecration of one's self, the perfect resolution to give up and cast out every evil thing from us.

[1] Collect for Second Sunday in Advent. [2] St. James iv. 8.
[3] Ps. lxvi. 8. [4] *Ibid.* cxxxix. 2. [5] St. John vii. 17.

How differently do persons come to His Altar — some with hearts prepared and love aflame, and earnest desire to be what He would have them, and others, alas! with divided minds and imperfect repentance, and no energy of self-renunciation. It is

> The eye of Faith which waxes bright
> Each moment by Thine Altar's Light.

In spiritual things you cannot divorce knowledge and love. If one does not seek the Lord Jesus in the Holy Communion as the Saviour of his own soul, the strength of his heart and his portion forever; if his heart is not full of desire to be forgiven and cleansed that His Lord may come in and dwell there — how can he see Jesus? Pray to see Him, pray for the desire to see Him, for if you once do really see Him, your hearts are won. He conquers them by love. And all this seeing God here in the ways of His manifestation, while it is the natural sequence of being pure in heart, is also essential to that Vision of Him hereafter, which is hope's fruition and the very fullness of joy. Some converted heathen were translating the Scripture into their own language, and came to the verse in the first Epistle of St. John: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."[1] They exclaimed: "No, that cannot be, it is too much; let us write: "We shall

[1] 1 St. John iii. 2.

be permitted to bow low before Him and kiss His feet." But the promise stands as it is written, and to see God sums up all that we can conceive of the blessedness of Heaven. For He is the satisfaction of every restless desire and longing of the soul, he is the perfection of beauty, and the highest earthly beauty is but a dim light from Him. He is the fountain of wisdom, and the perplexed, inquiring spirit will in Him assuage its thirst. He is the everlasting shelter, and the way-worn and hard pressed will sit down under His shadow with great delight. And He is love immortal, and those whose hearts have been broken by an earthly love failing them, or disappointed in finding none which met the yearning of their hearts, in Him find all that they can desire — a love which leaves no void places, which bears no fruits of disappointment, which cannot die. To lie within the light of God, upon the Saviour's breast, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest,"[1] this is indeed to attain the end of life. And this Life Eternal begins here, "to know Thee the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."[2]

Again the thought arises that you are here to-day for the last Sunday's worship in this place, never again to reassemble, whom once this week has parted. Our hearts swell with a longing that you may be blessed, one and all, that none of us may fail of the grace of God,

[1] Job iii. 17. [2] St. John xvii. 3.

or lead beggared, stunted lives, or plunge in recklessness and self-will out into the outer darkness. See what life really is, how short and uncertain. Think of those who, when this term began, were with us, radiant with vitality and hope and promise, sure of their years, to whom the future was like a pleasant path into blue distances and with no near dark ending. Yet death came, in such strange ways, in such sorrowful ways, and called them and they had to follow. There was a short resistance, nature pled, and friends agonized; but their eyes darkened, and they reached forth helpless hands, and went out into that land which sends back no messages.[1] Thank God, we can commend them with loving trust to His mercy. We know that they never wilfully shut themselves out from His love. We know of both the boy and the man that they desired to see and know Him, "to behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to visit His temple."[2] And so we think of them to-day as undergoing His loving training, at rest, "under the shadow of His wings."[3] But when our turn comes, how will it be with us? We must be pure in heart to have the blessing of the pure in heart. Our own reason would convince us, if it was not expressly affirmed in Holy Scripture, that "without holiness no man can see the Lord."[4] And to see Him in this sense is to be saved forever. What can it mean,

[1] Albert Emery died at St. Paul's School, Feb. 11, 1884. Augustus M. Swift, Assistant Master of St. Paul's School, died in Rome, March, 1884.

[2] Ps. xxvii. 4. [3] *Ibid.* xvii. 8. [4] Heb. xii. 14.

when on the last page of the Bible we read that the Angel of God said to the Apostle, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still"?[1] "Is it not the declaration of the ever-terrible truth that men are building up their destiny by the actions and habits of their lives? Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny."[2] Do not be discouraged, any of you, if to-day you are conscious that the blessing of the pure in heart is not for you. For One is among us, Who loves our souls, Who will listen to your prayers, Who will give you power to will rightly, to will strongly, to will triumphantly, to turn the whole current of your thoughts and desires to Himself, to fight the besetting sin in the Name and power of the besetting God, to pray in all places, at all times, with availing earnestness the prayer, "O Lord, take Thou my heart, for I cannot give it! And when Thou hast it, oh keep it, for I cannot keep it for Thee, and save me in spite of myself, for Jesus Christ's sake."

[1] Rev. xxii. 11. [2] Attributed to W. M. Thackeray.

SERMON XXII

IDEALS

DEUTERONOMY xxxii. 52.

"Thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither."

AND this was the issue of a great and faithful life. Moses's history had been a varied one. There could be no greater contrasts than those afforded by its several stages of courtier, shepherd, and leader of Israel. Its interest and meaning culminate in its last forty years. And what a record this was of peril and anxiety, of depression and trust, of patience and suffering, of absolute disinterestedness and devoted patriotism, on the part of one who combined in his own person those resplendent qualities of physical and mental power, complete self-control and moral preëminence, which mark the founders of empires, the lawgivers and moulders of national life. What had upheld him during the long penal wanderings in the desert? Thirty-eight years before God spoke the words of the text to him, he lay encamped with his rescued people on the extreme southern border of the Land of Promise. Then their cowardice, sloth, and ingratitude brought upon them the Divine displeasure, and they were turned

back to what seemed an aimless wandering in a waste, cheerless wilderness, where to live at all they were forced to depend daily upon the bounty of the Most High. Meanwhile their great-souled leader was compelled to share their punishment, to bear the miseries of hopes deferred, of monotonous, wearying, desert life, unsettled, fruitless, homeless. Through it all, there had fallen from Moses's lips no word of complaint, though he must have experienced the daily disappointment, heartache, disgust, which the conduct of the narrow-minded, servile, rebellious crowd he led could not fail to inspire. Through it all, by the help of the Almighty, upborne by ideals to be fulfilled, Moses had gone patiently on. Once, indeed, his heart gave way, his indignation mastered him, and for a brief moment he spoke as though he was himself Israel's rightful king; but only once. There had been many provocations before that; and many dark days when despair lay ambushed at his tent door. What had been the upholding vision during all these years? To bring his people safely through, to stand on the bank and see the arrowy rush of the Jordan, and then triumphantly to cross over its waters, to conquer the fair land which lay beyond, the land always pictured to his mental gaze, amid the wearisome horizon of the desert, as "a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the begin-

ning of the year even unto the end of the year."[1] Lovely to reach an end of all these toils, to settle these travel-worn women and restless children in comfortable, peaceful homes; to devise ways of uplifting and purifying these common, unlit lives, of forming and welding together these disorderly, fragmentary elements of a nation; above all, to establish in their midst "a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His Name to dwell there,"[2] which should be the seat and centre of their life, both religious and political, their rallying point, to which their daily worship everywhere should turn — whether one lived on the plain of Esdraelon, or in the city of palm trees, or with Zabulon at the haven of the sea — with one altar of burnt-offering, and one continuous, glorious worship ever circling round it, until the splendid ideal became a living fact. "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms. . . . Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also His heavens shall drop down dew."[3] If it was a dream, it was a worthy, unselfish one: a nation of slaves transformed to a nation of true men; an undisciplined horde into a civilized, law-abiding people; a multitude of fickle, ignorant, untaught idolaters trained to a pure and holy faith, in obedience to a perfect moral law, by a worship, which, heartfelt and magnificent in itself,

[1] Deut. xi. 11, 12. [2] *Ibid.* xii. 11. [3] *Ibid.* xxxiii. 27, 28.

should derive its efficacy and significance from that which it foreshadowed, and for which it was designed to prepare. Manliness, mental and social discipline, worship — these were the factors of the lawgiver's ideal state. And the material was fitted to it; the end was ever recurring in his mind like the uplifting refrain in a long-drawn piece of music. "For His Salvation is nigh them that fear him: that glory may dwell in our land."[1] But now the ideal was shattered. "Thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither." Whatever might befall his people in future, unknown years, his personal work for them was incomplete and thwarted. What had the conquest of those transfluvian tribes and kings availed? The lands of Sihon, Og, and Midian were but the basis of the victotories to be; but the palm-groves dimly seen across the river, the leaping hills of Engedi, the cedar-clad mountains in the north, the flower-mantled plains to the west, and the blue sea whose waves should bear in far-off days teachers of his race with Apostolic mission to coasts and nations known only to him by name — all this would be merely a vision. He should go away in awful loneliness, and die, on some bleak hill of Moab, and not even his bones should rest by Joseph's or Abraham's. His very grave should be God's secret, never to be watered by human tears. Yet it had been right to bear the ideal of the promised home about with

[1] Ps. lxxxv. 9.

him amid the distresses and baffled hopes of those long forty years. Just as it was right, nay, glorious, for St. Augustine, as his stormy life was closing, and the swarms of fierce barbarians were besieging his city and laying waste the world, to uplift his ideal, which was and is, in spite of sin, Satan, and death, a glorious reality. "Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou City of God."[1]

Men must have an ideal, a pattern for any work they undertake, whether for themselves or others. Consciously or unconsciously they are working under it. Whether "earthly, sensual, devilish,"[2] as worthless as any African fetish, as vulgar in conception as the Epicurean paradise, or noble, heaven-inspired, and worthy of one created in the image of God, ideal there will be — a standard of happiness, an object to aim at, and a motive to action. Nations, institutions, communities, places like this, have an ideal — represent some thought — become the outward expression, more or less accurate, of some inward, invisible idea. Take this School: its work — its *raison d'être* — is education, and that must be threefold, to deserve the name, corresponding to the threefold nature of man — body, soul, and spirit. The body is to be trained to be the obedient, capable, ready servant of the secular reason, and the will instructed and ruled by that moral sense within us which is the medium of Divine communica-

[1] Ps. lxxxvii. 2. [2] St. James iii. 15.

tions and influences to the whole being. To express in one word the ideal of all physical training — manliness is the aim which conveys to us an idea of the desirable result of a plain and ordered way of living, of the hardening and maturing of bodily powers by proper, well-directed exercise. A pampered, indulged body produces the opposite effect, in the stupid, overfed, effeminate face and form, in the growing inability to deny the appetites anything which they crave, till the issue is reached in such a case as the man's whose medical adviser telling him that his continued life depended on some regimen requiring a moderate self-denial, he exclaimed: "Doctor, I cannot do it. I had rather die." An exaggerated devotion to games and bodily feats produces a similar result. The mind is sacrificed to the muscles. Vacant eyes and senseless looks and an abject dread of mental exertion are poorly compensated for by five minutes' cheering of some thoughtless, gaping crowd. A man can well dispense with beauty; but strength and serviceableness of body God has put within the reach of far the larger number.

A proper use of our resources, a due attention to natural laws, will give the most of us health, the power to do, to endure, to withstand, whatever God would have us do, endure, or withstand, and that is to have full possession of our manhood, to enter into the birthright of free men. The soul is the second part of us, of which an intelligible, if a somewhat loose definition is, that part of us

which adapts us to take our place and do our work in this world — what one may call the secular part of our complex nature, which acts upon the reports brought in by the senses, which connects us with our fellow-men, and takes cognizance of the machinery and direction of this earthly life. And the ideal of the soul's training is discipline — disciplined affections, a disciplined will and judgment and reason; and the object of rules in homes and schools, of ordered time, of varied study, exacting toil and thought, memory, attention, discernment, is to bring about this discipline — that the mind should get all possible furnishing and equipment for the work it has to do, that every faculty we have should be under command, so to speak, and available, and that traditions of good scholarship and generous devotion to noble pursuits should be handed on to the next generation and the next, and that the inspiration of learning should emancipate us, at least, from making selfish indulgence and money-getting our chief business in this world, and the opinions and fashions of our particular set bound our secular horizon. What should form the ideal of a school unless that it be a place of discipline, where young and old alike learn to value the priceless opportunities of time and training, to direct impulses and energies so as to produce some lasting fruit, and to put themselves in touch with the great minds of the past, and those of the present who are using their powers for the welfare of their fellow men?

And the third division of man's complex nature is the spirit, the moral sense within us, whether we call it conscience or the spiritual reason, incomparably the highest part of us, meant to be taken hold of, indwelt and ruled by the Holy Spirit of God. And the ideal of man's spirit, at once its training and its exercise, is worship, the worship of the Almighty, "God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity."[1] It is plain that the secular powers of our nature can have no fair development, if the highest and noblest of our prerogatives and functions is lost sight of. A prayerless scholar is a contradiction and an anomaly. A school in this land, in which the Revealed Word of God is thrust into a corner, and never read or studied, is like a reservoir which is never fed from fresh and living springs. "*Dominus illuminatio mea.*"[2] The loveliest intellectual result belongs to the work of those who have set God always before them, (may I not add?) who have held fast to the Faith of the Catholic Church and lived in humble, daily use of the blessings of its Communion. And, therefore, in a place like this, one's highest ideal finds its centre here, in the House of the Lord, in His daily and sacramental worship. Body and soul, as well as spirit, claim from each one of us, the youngest child here, the service of secret daily prayer, and then the united purpose and endeavour to give the Lord the honour due unto His Name, to worship Him with a holy, united worship. And what-

[1] Bishop Heber's Hymn. [2] Ps. xxvii. 1 the motto of the University of Oxford.

ever in this ideal is abortive or incomplete, surely the worst that can befall us would be to give it up, and become reconciled to a shallow, commonplace, worldly standard. However far our worship is from enforcing and exhibiting by daily use the blessedness of continuous prayer, leading up through week-day matins and even-song to glorious Lord's Day services, in which heart and voice and outward reverence and inward love combine, until the perfection and crown of all is reached in the Altar Service, and Jesus Christ is welcomed among us in the veiled majesty of the Eucharistic Glory — be sure that is the crown and sanctification of earth's ideals, our benediction and our peace, when He abideth in us and we in Him, and we are straining every power to love, worship, and adore Him as He is adored on high. Surely the ideal is right and true, and to be cherished, though our manliness and discipline and worship are crude and most defective and far below what we might reasonably expect, and the common life among us therefore is not uplifted and braced to help and bless the many who need uplifting. One stands to-day in imagination with the great lawgiver of Israel, and looks from a sterile peak around on a multitude, satisfied with booths and tents, with temporary habitation and for time. And life is short and art long, and one and another of us already hears the rushing of death's river, and the work is far away from its accomplishment, and there remains much land to be possessed.

Shall we give up the ideal we have had before us, or lower and shape it to suit a self-willed, faithless, superficial age? Ah, no, never, by the help of God, never! This place belongs to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is and shall be its true Light and King. The moral ideals are the only true and just ones. Moses's earthly ideals were frustrated, his work dropped from his aged hands, his heart died before his body, as the bright vision of his life grew dim and faded away. But one greater than Moses fulfilled the whole. In Him perfect Manliness, and noble Discipline and acceptable Worship were realized. He leads His children to the true Land of Promise, and His is a Kingdom which shall not be moved, and a Glory which shall never pass away.

SERMON XXIII

TEMPTATION

St. James i. 12.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

Life is a state of temptation. No one escapes while his salvation is in the balance. They only are unconscious of temptation who have reached those borders of Paradise where one simply waits to be delivered from the burden of the flesh; or those (more in number than men think) who by long and wilful sinning have lost all consciousness of sin. Conscience itself becomes seared and dead for the time, the Tempter, having given the impetus, does not need to accelerate their descent to perdition. Nations and communities, like individuals, undergo their temptations. First, usually, is a period of struggle, of early patriotism and deeds of noble self-devotion. Then comes the period of prosperity, when the vitality and moral value of their institutions are tried, "lest one good custom should corrupt the world."[1] Then comes the period of decadence, the failure of human nature, when the national

[1] Tennyson: "The Passing of Arthur."

life must be reinvigorated by change and suffering, and the infusion of a new element. Each stage has its peculiar trials, just as each stage of a single life has. The fact that life is a probation, that we are on trial, that our days are numbered, that on a few years hangs our eternal destination, gives dignity to the existence of a beggar, and inconceivable importance to man's lowliest condition. He who took our manhood, and "experienced every human pain," underwent a threefold temptation, which, though infinitely beyond our comprehension, was still such a temptation that we are told by the Apostle that, "in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted,"[1] and again that "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."[2] There can, therefore, be no sin in being tempted, provided we have not sought out the temptation. We pray "Lead us not into temptation" — to use the old Latin version, "*Ne nos induci patiaris*," "Suffer us not to be led into temptation,"[3] showing that temptation is not to be courted. But if God's providence allows conditions of temptation to surround us (and these in some form we must meet everywhere), we may surely anticipate His ready help, the guardianship of angels, the guidance of His Word,

[1] Heb. ii. 18. [2] *Ibid.* iv. 15.
[3] *Vide* St. Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiæ*, c. vi. 12.

the grace of Sacraments, and that inexplicable, but experienced influence of His Holy Spirit, which in the worst trials uplifts the trusting soul, deafens it to the foolish or wicked outcries of the world, as the Psalmist says, "set my feet upon the rock and ordered my goings."[1]

"Blessed is the man who endureth temptation." Let us present such a person to our minds, and ask: Are we like him? And if not, why not? Why should not all of us here obtain the benediction of the conquerors of temptation? Take such temptations as are common to men. Men in general like ease. They have to rouse themselves to exertion. Agathos, as I shall name my example, is naturally indolent. He is fond of good living and late rising, and pleasant literature, and warm, bright rooms, and to have his afternoon and evening recreations ready to hand. He has been, I shall suppose, shielded from much of the world's wear and tear, and compelled to do only what it has suited him to do at the moment. Consequently life has seemed to him rather a moving panorama, arranged with a view to amusement, than a great and brief opportunity for getting and doing good. His temptations are those to softness and self-indulgence, the gratification of the bodily appetites, to be pleasure-seeking and pleasure-loving, to ignore distasteful duties, and to dread any form of continuous labour. He carries this bundle and heavy weight of temptation in his pampered,

[1] Ps. xl. 2.

undisciplined body, and in his mind as little inured to manly exercise as the mind of an infant. But with all this to hinder him, he has the honest and good heart which hears the Voice of Jesus. The Good Spirit of God has laid hold of all that is best and most truthful within him. He has begun to consider the true meaning of life, the value of time, and that his soul is precious in God's sight. For was not the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ freely shed for it? He knows that to follow Christ is, though not a drudgery, still a service, and that a servant must not pick and choose, but do the work set before him heartily and persistently. Christ is his Master. Agathos has chosen Him. He has solemnly promised to love and obey Him. His Master's interests must now be his. So he sets out to climb the holy hill in the narrow track where Jesus leads, and saints and martyrs follow. He knows that to do this he must above all else be instant in prayer. He gets up betimes in the morning to say his prayers. The morning sun calls him to his day's work for God. He no longer sallies forth with his soul undressed to take things as they come and have a lounging day. He knows there is never a holiday from God's work. He lays out as clearly as he can what he ought to do, and plans earnestly and faithfully to fulfil it. If mental application is demanded, he puts his whole soul into his work. The uncertain will, the nerveless memory, the listless attention, are all taken to task. Conscience

holds the reins, and the enfeebled understanding itself begins to rally. "*Fervet opus.*"[1]

> Think not of rest; tho' dreams be sweet,
> Start up and ply your heavenward feet.[2]

Here is motive. Here is the highest of all ambitions. Yet the easy, sloth-loving nature holds one back. The tempter is prolific in excuses. Satan is the master of excuse. "Why should life be made hard? Why so much and such constant effort? You did well this morning. Have a little change this evening. Shorten your prayers a little. A. and. B have no trouble with their work — at least, they take none. They make no fuss about being faithful to their duty, yet they get on as well as, or better than you. They are more thought of, at least. Why should you be more religious than your neighbours? People can be religious without so much strain. Look at such an one. He is a communicant, but he never has any duties — at least, he never makes a business of any." And then to all these pretences and suggestions the inward Voice replies: "Follow Me, and thou shalt no more walk in darkness; but shalt have the light of life.[3] If thou listenest to the loiterers and triflers; if thou thinkest only of play, and eating, and drinking, and idleness, the Master and His train will pass by, and leave thee far behind, where thou shalt not be able to catch the cheering words from His lips, nor

[1] *Æneid*, lib. i. 436.
[2] "The Christian Year:" "The Second Sunday in Advent."
[3] *Vide* St. John viii. 12.

to see the loving glance with which He turns to comfort and sustain thee. No Cross, no Crown.

> The path of sorrow, and that path alone
> Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.[1]

O Agathos, every word or thought or deed may be a step towards Heaven or Hell." "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little."[2] By God's help he hears the warning, loving Voice, shakes off the evil, drowsy influence, and presses on. I saw him with his companions. Some of these were irreligious and profane. Many were very thoughtless, and he liked to be well thought of, to have pleasant smiles and greetings and to be a leader among them. Since his time for foolish talking and idle lounging was now greatly curtailed, he saw he was losing ground with those whom, their legitimate duties being neglected, the evil one contrives to employ. Many little ways of theirs he had to give up, because they were incompatible with perfect truth and unsullied honour. Thus he became a sort of living rebuke, gentle and courteous as he was; and the bad disliked and feared him. They made up evil stories about him. They imputed to him ulterior and selfish motives. He found that his strictness made him unpopular. While he was thinking of serving God, he was apparently losing ground in the estimation of man. So the world tempted him. He was wounded and depressed, but went patiently forward. I saw that

[1] William Cowper. [2] Eccles. xix. 1.

he instinctively drew nearer to Him Who "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself."[1] And as old Bishop Wilson said, "Close walking is safe walking." But you must not suppose that Satan leaves Agathos alone. He is always after him. He tries to make him plume himself on his goodness and to compare himself with others who are less conscientious. He suggests envious, hateful thoughts of others. He whispers to his self-love, that he ought to resent such and such treatment, and not bear and be patient with one whose manners are repellent, and who is encroaching and selfish. Vanity, self-will, and censoriousness are hard to get the better of. But Agathos looks steadfastly to the patience and gentleness of Jesus. He makes the loving kindness of the Lord his study, and watches his time, forgives the wrongdoer, and returns good for evil. In his own sense of shortcoming and sinfulness, he has no air of heaping coals of fire on the heads of the unfriendly. He humbles himself, and so he is exalted. I cannot ennumerate the multiplicity of his temptations. Seek them in your own hearts and in your daily experience. I saw him endure them day by day, often downcast, often downtrodden, but never wholly overcome, and he is still enduring them. The conflict is well on to its close now, and grace is winning the day. The face is calm, and firm, and bears traces of past struggles

[1] Heb. xii. 3.

and self-mastery. Holy and kindly thoughts are mirrored there. The habits are getting more and more fixed in the way of righteousness. He hardly heeds or hears the tempting voices and cajolements of the world. His step is strong and sure, and he is already within the outer range of that light of the just, which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[1] And when he draws nearest to his Lord in the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood, there is no cloud of unrepented, unforgiven sin to dim the brightness of His Master's Countenance. The peace that passeth understanding is there. "In My Presence is the fulness of joy."[2] All the delights of earth are the merest shadows to this.

Death can have no power to sever
The communion of the blest.
To abide in Thee forever,
This is Heaven, and this is rest.

And after these days of vicissitude and probation, after the conflict with the last enemy, he shall receive all that is bound up of joy, success, and victory in those words, "the Crown of Life," which means his life crowned; "the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."[3] O that we may endure with Agathos, with all the good, and that this scene of our temptation may become the field of our triumph!

[1] Prov. iv. 18. [2] Ps. xvi. 12. [3] St. James i. 12.

SERMON XXIV

FISHERS OF MEN

St. Luke v. 5.

"At Thy word I will let down the net."

In all the great callings, to which men devote their lives, there is an end, which is worthy the labour and energies of an honourable man, which is independent of those purely personal considerations of livelihood, which, while they cannot and ought not to be wholly set aside, are not as an end sufficient. There is the service of science, the hope of making some progress in the wide fields of discovery, of leaving behind some memorial of diligent investigation, which may afford vantage-ground to some one after us. There is the service of society, the lessening the great sum of human suffering, the establishing on firmer foundations the structure of social order, the repression of vice and anarchy, which is the parent of vice, the advancement of sound education, the doing something for the improvement and elevation of one's own people, his state or fatherland. It is essential to any noble effort that a man should have the highest conception of the calling upon which he enters; that, in apostolic phrase, he

should "magnify his office;"[1] that he should take the broadest view of the possibilities which open before him, and cherish the deepest and most conscientious sense of the corresponding obligations. Then he rises above the dulness of routine. He goes forth to his daily work as to a mission, with the enthusiasm which lightens toil. He has a worthy pride in his high calling, and the noble names who, in the past and present, adorn it. He has a reserve fund of high thought and earnest resolve to draw upon, when repelled, as oftentimes he must be, by the indifference and selfishness of those who know nothing of his aspirations, and care less. To take some adequate measure, therefore, of the work he has in hand, to know what the truest end and scope of his profession is, seems to be the first requisite for one who would perform wisely and faithfully the duties which arise from it. To live himself in tolerable comfort, and to take due care of those dependent upon him, is indeed a corollary to any work a man undertakes; but, if this is the man's end in becoming a physician or a lawyer, an architect or a teacher; if he has no enthusiasm for his art or science, no grand outline of the ideal physician, or lawyer, or whatever else, before his mind, his work will be measured to his end, and the one will be likely to be selfish and ignoble, because that is the character of the other. There is moreover a subtle, undefinable atmosphere about every man, better felt than described,

[1] Rom. xi. 13.

which proceeds from his inner self, of which he is hardly cognizant, which grows out of the conception which he habitually entertains of the work of his life and the end for which he toils. If these are mean and personal and narrow, such becomes the tone of the man, the medium through which he looks at and judges things, of which you or I become conscious, when we have dealings with him, as conscious as of marshy odours in the neighborhood of a morass. If the man is gross and self-indulgent in his secret thoughts and desires, that spirit sifts out into the air of his daily life and surroundings. Base ends sooner or later infect the spiritual raiment, and whatever the man's words or professions, his tone, that is, the unexpressed temper of his daily intercourse and work, is lowered, and though the world may not find him out (and there may be nothing, in the ordinary sense of the words, to be found out), still it rates him truly as no better than the common multitude who never rise above the dead level of personal ends, and who look at those who do, something as a fish might at a bird. If, on the other hand, there is a noble conception of one's calling in the mind, and an ever-present desire and effort to realize it, then the tone of the man's daily life becomes also noble. Without thinking of self at all, he does commonplace things in a noble spirit. He redeems the less beautiful features of his work from earthliness, and he carries forth into his intercourse with his fellows that breadth and con-

sistency of purpose which make a man just and kindly and generous and patient, humble without being mean-spirited, and self-respecting without being arrogant.

I may be pardoned at this time if I dwell less on the doctrine of the Priesthood than on the end which we Priests should set before us; less on the Divine theory of the office than on the spirit in which men should exercise it. And surely as we uplift our thoughts to Him, Who is the Great High Priest, the Head of the Church, from Whom all our gifts and authorities are derived, Whose perpetual intercession in the Heavenly Temple it is our highest privilege to echo in our feeble way in His Temple here on earth, we are bound to recall His mission among men: the end which He set before Him, and the spirit in which He underwent the commendation and the contradiction of sinners. "Wherefore," in most fitting words of Scripture, "holy brethren, partakers of the Heavenly Calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."[1] "This is a true saying and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."[2] And so in that most precious and edifying exhortation, to which you will shortly listen in the Ordinal, we are told that the great business of Christ's priests and ministers is "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they

[1] Heb. iii. 1. [2] 1 Tim. i. 15.

may be saved through Christ forever."[1] Here then we have the end of the Christian Ministry set plainly before us, and it is the highest of which the imagination can conceive. Other callings also have worthy and noble ends, aiming more or less directly at the well-being of man; but this of ours has for its field the immortal in man's nature, that the seed of the Divine planting in each one's soul should live and not die, but, by the Sacrifice and Death of Christ and through the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, be cherished and ripened to bring forth fruit to perfection in a happier, safer clime. In the plainest words, the end of our calling is to serve our Blessed Lord, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, in seeking to save the souls of our fellow-men in the wise and faithful and untiring stewardship of those supreme mysteries and means of grace, which He has appointed for their salvation. Our lives are consecrated to this end; to this end we are separated from the great mass of our fellow-sinners (ourselves confessing that we are as fallible and necessitous as they), trained by special studies and moral discipline, endowed with peculiar gifts of the Holy Spirit, honoured with the loftiest functions that can be intrusted to mortal man, even to stand and plead the One Prevailing Sacrifice, and break and dispense the Bread of Everlasting Life, even to declare and pronounce to Christ's "people, being penitent, the absolution and remission

[1] *Vide* The Form and Manner of Ordering Priests.

of their sins."[1] And so St. Paul calls our office "the Ministry of Reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."[2]

To serve the Lord Jesus Christ in our own lives, in our secret hearts, first of all. Ourselves to pursue that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;"[3] and then to win all others, whom we can influence, to the love and service of our Master and King — this is the true end of our priesthood, humbly following with faltering, distant steps the Great High Priest of our Profession in His life of holy toil and sacrifice here among men. It is evident that feebly to comprehend this, with all the powers and faculties within us, to accept this as our end, is to be uplifted at once to a higher plane of thought and action than that in which our fellow-men are wont commonly to move; is, in the world, to lead an unworldly life, to subject oneself habitually to a suppression of self, a moral discipline, which, without such end, would be unmeaning and intolerable. The patient never-intermitted effort by praying to learn how to pray; the rigid and careful training of all our intel-

[1] *Vide* The Order for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20. [3] Heb. xii. 14.

lectual powers, not that their occasional display may kindle idle admiration and win men's praise, but that their wisely directed exercise may be subservient to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among men; the daily prolonged and ardent study of the Book of God, with all the assistance which the erudition of the past has accumulated; the devout, unwearied meditation upon passages and verses, that out of their exhaustless riches we may draw the golden truths to enrich our own souls and those to whom we minister; the frequent celebration or receiving of the Holy Eucharist as the highest means of grace for ourselves, and the most efficacious pleading of the One Sacrifice for the souls of others; the going forth from holy duties with our whole souls bathed in the effluence of Christ's Presence — all these methods of spiritual training demand a decision in the disposition of time, in the choice of occupation, in the resolute surrender of paltry and fruitless indulgences, which can only come from the highest end, kept persistently before the mind, and set up every day as the mark for one's daily care and endeavour. In the prosecution of that blessed work, which Christ has given us to do, it is not needful that a man, even with the direct cure of souls in a parish, should always be engaged in the peculiar work of the Priesthood. To reach the educated classes of our restless day and generation he must read and study those works and publications which bear on the great questions in

which men are interested. He must in any place, where his lot is cast, be ready to do his part, wisely and earnestly, in advancing the education of the young, in directing and purifying the current of public opinion, in seeking, to the best of his ability, to introduce into the society, of which he forms a part, that leaven of the Gospel, which is moulding and transforming his own inner life. If a man has the true pastoral heart, he carries on his work on week days as well as Sundays, on the roadside as well as in the pulpit, indirectly in the class-room, conveying secular instruction, as well as directly in the Sunday School with the Bible and Prayer-book for text-books. There is much effective preaching which is not preaching at all in the ordinary sense. A chance word, even a look, the turn given in the most natural way to a commonplace sentiment, may be more helpful than a formal discourse. The emissaries of evil are tireless and vigilant. They lie in wait for souls. "They sit lurking in the thievish corners of the streets: and privily in their lurking dens do they murder the souls of the innocent and unwary." Surely there is a strong call for the like watchfulness and zeal, the like promptness in looking out for and seizing upon opportunities on the Lord's side. The true pastor will use a holy art to win men to goodness. He will seek to foil the spirits of evil by an energy and enthusiasm at least equal to theirs. He will plan, with careful

[1] Ps. x. 8.

thought and a wise adoption of righteous means to his great end, to reach every soul for good within the range of his influence, to reclaim the sinful from the paths of ruin, to edify the faithful, to convince the doubtful, and instruct the ignorant. He casts the net on every side into the great sea of humanity, and evening and morning, at all hours, he plies his holy calling in the "Name, which is above every name,"[1] and at the word which to hear is to obey. And so the spirit, in which he goes about his daily round, in which he lives and moves, is luminous with this end. It is the spirit of the Good Shepherd, the spirit which has

> Counted the cost, in all to espy
> His God, in all himself deny.

He carries with him in all places and societies an uplifting element, a higher, sweeter tone than that of men around him. The profane and scoffing tongue is silenced in his presence. The low and vicious story is withheld. He gives no countenance to envious detraction or reckless gossip. He shuns personal talk; but for cheerful, kindly, helpful conversation he is always ready. No associations connected with him unfit him to be a guide to the penitent sinner, or an instructor of the baptized catechumen, or a comfort to those whom God has afflicted, or a helper and counsellor to the dying. There is no shrinking from any duty, because duty is the air he breathes, and no fear of the roar of man

[1] Phil. ii. 9.

in the discharge of that duty, for he trembles before God. The pathway in which he moves through all the changeful seasons and events of life, is the path of the Good Shepherd, seeking souls to save them, winning them to Christ, laying out his best treasures in this noble and lovely service, and hearing all the while in the still depths of the heart the dear Voice of the Master, saying "Follow Me."[1]

And who is sufficient for these things? And does not my own heart fail and die within me as, in this lame and imperfect way, I set before my own eyes the ideal of my calling, the end for which Christ's true Priests labour, and the holy and winning spirit, which rises like incense from this blessed toil, and imparts its perfume and character to their daily lives? And who can hope that he has attained, or is worthy of such high vocation, or can dare to say with his Master: "It is my meat to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work"?[2] And yet let us take heart to-day, who, led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit, have taken God's work in hand in a world of sin and sorrow — we, who go forth bearing His inestimable gifts in earthly vessels, and holding on high before scoffing, unbelieving, disobedient and dying men the Cross on which He died. For it is at His word that we let down the net, and it is His Word, and not our own, which we are commissioned to deliver, and "we preach not ourselves, but Christ

[1] St. Matt. iv. 19. [2] St. John iv. 34.

Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."[1] We ask our fellow men to lose sight of the messenger in the message, of the steward of the Mysteries in the Mysteries themselves. The great work of the Church goes on. It is all one work from the Day of the Ascension to this hour. Many generations of workers, more or less faithful, have lived and died. A long line of Christian Priests, numbered by thousand thousands, have passed to their account, and still the fields are white, and the harvest plenteous and the labourers going forth, and the Day of the Lord is drawing nigh. We take up what others, far better and holier, have laid aside; but, at Thy word, O Blessed Jesus, we let down the net. We toil all the night of this mortal life, however poor the issue, knowing that in the morning of the Resurrection the nets will be drawn in, and Thou wilt be standing by, Thyself, upon the Eternal Shore.

And O my dear brethren and companions, who, after the faithful preparations of the lower office, are at this hour about to be admitted to the most holy and blissful work to which men can be called, think not of your loving friend, the preacher, in these poor words, which he has uttered, to his own soul in secret first, and now, with a self-accusing spirit, to you. Think only of that Adorable Lord and Master, upon Whose nearer service you will enter, upon Whose arm

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 5.

you must lean, and Who, as you draw nigh to Him with humble and true hearts, has promised to draw nigh to you. At His word, let down the net. Let doubts and fears and self-distrust be silent, while you set yourselves simply to obey His Voice and do His bidding. Be His Cross your strength, and by His Cross your triumph. That is the secret of holy living, of effective preaching, the preaching of the life as well as the preaching of the lips. That is the rod to chastise and the staff to sustain. May you be honoured to win souls to "Christ and Him crucified,"[1] and may the end of your conversation be "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."[2] And when the working days are over, and you can no more "go on your ways weeping, and bearing forth good seed,"[3] may you come home "again with joy" into that Good Land of Promise, laden with abundant sheaves of faithful, loving labour, which Christ shall treasure in His garner, and count His Own forever!

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2. [2] Heb. xiii. 8. [3] Ps. cxxvi. 7.

SERMON XXV

WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE

EPHESIANS iii. 19.

"To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

THE words seem a contradiction. How can we know that which surpasses knowledge, that is, our power to know what, being infinite, without limits or bounds, stretches away and away, far beyond our finite powers of vision? The words are a paradox; by which we mean some statement which in appearance and on the surface seems impossible or false, but is true in fact. I take the words as our helpful lesson to-day. We are gathered here, mainly to acquire knowledge, not to become knowing, or to get the outward show and smattering of an education, or merely to pass some technical examination elsewhere a year or two hence; but to learn and, if possible, to master those rudiments of human knowledge — "*scientia scibilis*" — such knowledge as man is capable of; which will train and exercise our natural faculties, furnish and replenish our minds, fit us by God's blessing for whatever work He has in store for us, whether in this life or in the life to

come; which will at least occupy and direct our energies so that our talents, whether five or two or one, may be laid out to advantage, to the welfare of our fellow-men and to His honour and glory. We are all to be engaged in the same work, teachers as well as learners, masters as well as scholars; for there can be no good teaching, unless accompanied by continued and well-directed study; and the only distinction between teacher and taught is, not that the one knows a little more than the other, but that he is trained and matured to see the relations and extent of the great departments of knowledge, and has a deeper and keener sense of the insignificance of his own share, of what may be said to constitute his small personal possession. Those who are most thoroughly and fully trained, who have acquired some degree of facility and understanding in one or more sections of the vast field of knowledge, are the most humble in the estimate of their own acquirements, the most ready to learn from others, the furthest from feeling or assuming that they have reached the frontier in any study. Ignorance is opinionated, self-satisfied, positive without reason, often conceited and wordy. One of the chief benefits of hard study is the discipline which comes from realizing our limitations, and the fact that we can never reach the utmost bounds in any branch of knowledge. There are always regions, beyond which we have not explored; beyond our narrow horizon lie vast continents, of which we have

never dreamed, so that it may be said of any noble study, which we set out to know, that it really passes knowledge, since it has relations and results which outstrip our highest thoughts. The true scholar, older or younger, will always be learning humility, self-distrust, and self-restraint. God alone knows all, alone is omniscient. The great laws, as we call them, of mathematics and physics, by which this universe lives and moves, belong to His thought, of which we get a partial glimpse, and He possesses the whole. All true knowledge implies God. So all true knowledge is His, and we may glorify Him in its pursuits, and fulfil thereby the end of our creation. Our task, therefore, is set. There is much unwise talk at the present day about practical knowledge as distinguished from that which is merely abstract and theoretical. There is really no such division. All real knowledge has its practical side and uses. The most abstract science may have direct bearing upon that which closely and intimately concerns us.

I need not tell you here that of all knowledge the most practical is that which has most to do with our action and the guidance of life, and that this is to know our full duty, in order that we may do it, and, to that end, know how to do it — lay hold, that is, of some living, life-sustaining principle which can rule and uphold us. That is the sort of knowledge that really tells for most, which is furthest removed from the

knowledge which merely puffeth up, and is doomed to vanish away. The first step in knowing God is to know our duty to Him. That is the only knowledge which outlasts these scenes and accompaniments of earth, which we feel will be enduring, "when the stars fall from the sky and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea."[1] And it is that, my dear friends and children, which is brought before us to-day, as the great object of our efforts, which surrounds and comprises, as it is meant to stimulate and control all other effort of body, soul, and spirit, and which the holy Apostle sums up in these great and memorable words, "to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Let us dwell for a moment upon them. The fact that we do not, and cannot fully understand what they mean is nothing. The way the very best and most earnest of us takes them is far below a great Saint's conception of them. St. Paul himself was overwhelmed by the sense of his own incapacity. It was to him as though he were trying in a small cup to scoop up the waters of the ocean. But no more can true human love be weighed and measured. It defies limitations of sense and equations of material value. What does one of you know of the depth, sincerity, and unselfishness of a good father's love for his children? Or of the tenderness and unfailing sympathy and never-sleeping watchfulness in your mother's heart? The keenest, bitterest suffering your

[1] *Cf.* St. Matt. xxiv. 29 and Ps. xlvi. 2.

parents can experience may come to them through your thoughtlessness and forgetfulness of their wishes. You cannot overestimate their devotion to you; you certainly can never sound it in its depths and heights. If it can be said of one of you, "He is, he has been, a good son," the words will sum up a great variety of excellence, and chiefly that forgetfulness of selfish gratifications and indulgence which best responds to and emulates their sacrifices for you. And yet, though true earthly love is imponderable and immortal, though it outlasts change, and is stronger than death, we are permitted to pray that we may know the breadth of the love of Christ, although it spans the universe, and to know its length, though that can only be measured by eternity, and of eternity we can form no conception. We are encouraged to strive to penetrate its depth which our Blessed Lord's humiliation sounds for us; but from Heaven and the inaccessible Throne of His Godhead to the conditions of our poor human nature is a distance immeasurable by us; the angels can only wonder at it, but cannot know. And as to the heights of that love, it is enough that He would exalt us to the same place whither He has gone before, that He would raise us one day up to Heaven, Who, "when He overcame the sharpness of death opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers."[1] It is sufficient for us to know the manifestations of His love in that He became

[1] *Te Deum.*

man for us men and for our redemption; and that means, for each one of us taken singly, for you and for me; that in His Church, which is the fruit of His Incarnation, He grafts us into Himself, and feeds us with Himself, in order that we may live the new life which is in Him. It is all a mystery, that is, it "passeth knowledge," and yet it is our endless study, and we may always be advancing and growing in it, and it is the study which bears the loveliest fruits, and of which the results are the most practical in service willingly rendered to the Lord Who hath bought us, and in cheerful, absolute conformity to, and acceptance of, His will. For life is itself a great mystery — this life, through which we are now passing with all its circumstances and events and environments. And death is a great mystery, the transition from this life into some other quite unknown state of existence. Every day, one and another of those, with whose outward aspect we are familiar, are taken out of our sight, from our present intercourse and society, in all manner of mysterious ways, and we are left on the shore of time, like those spirits in the great classic poet, reaching out our hands in longing for the farther shore. And to be set in our hearts to know the Love of Christ, and to live in the knowledge of it, and to trust it everywhere and always, till "the lamp of His love is our guide through the gloom,"[1] is the one and only solution of the mystery, the only real

[1] Bishop Heber: "At a Funeral."

balm of strength and healing. But it is that. For to know His love in the Apostle's sense of the word, in any true sense at all, is to take our stand at His side, and to shelter under His wing Who hath the keys of life and death. "It is not different from, or unlike, what we ask or think, but above or beyond, what we ask or think. The more we ask of God, the more we think of Him, the nearer do we approach it." In the Gospel for to-day [1] we are told how a poor, afflicted woman, going forth to bury her dead, her only one, her last living stay and consolation, was met outside of the city gates by "Love Divine, all love excelling."[2] Possibly in her stricken soul she was dumbly pondering the grief which had befallen her. "Why should I be singled out for such misery? Why should this young life, so much more to me than my own, have been snapped short in the midst of its helpfulness and promise? Where has my son gone out of my reach, soon even his poor remains to be hidden from me forever? How can I bear it? Why should I live on any longer?" And the funeral train wound on, and people looked as they do now, and kind hearts pitied and sympathized, that is, a little, in the degree that they are able, whom the sorrow does not really touch. And then in the narrow pathway occurred a pause, and a small company advancing compelled the bearers to halt to let them pass, and they set down the bier. And He,

[1] The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity. [2] Charles Wesley's Hymns.

Who was the centre of the throng, "the Resurrection and the Life,"[1] came up. He had foreseen whom He should meet, and His merciful heart yearned over the sorrow He was hastening on to cure. He touched the bier, on which, coffinless, as is the Eastern custom, lay the shrouded form. And even the one true mourner lifted her head and gazed into His Face which beamed with the life and strength of the Divine compassion. And she heard a Voice, which went through her very soul: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."[2] Forthwith the departed spirit was recalled into the lifeless body, the wrappings of death fell aside, and he, who had been dead, stirred and moved, and sat up and began to speak. And he, the Deliverer from the bonds of death, delivered him to his mother. And there the veil drops upon the scene. What followed, the Evangelist, with that wonderful reticence and spiritual refinement which characterizes the Divine narrative, tells not; nor what the youth may have felt or spoken, thus brought back from the world of spirits, of which he had had a transitory glimpse, a few hours' experience, such as no living man but those whom the Lord had raised from the dead could ever share with him. Be sure, his mother was content. She had begun "to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

As I stand here to-day, and think of the last Sunday's

[1] St. John xi. 25. [2] St. Luke vii. 14.

service of last year, I realize the mystery of this life and of its close, the inevitable changes, the uncertainty which hangs before us, and the power which God's grace gives us, to strengthen and mature us for whatever may befall. It is right to speak of the dear boy, who was taken from us, after the year's work was over, for four years a member of the School and of the choir, and whom many of you will remember as an example of bright cheerfulness, and youthful manliness, and spotless purity. God had better things in store for him than this life can give, and so saw fit, after a sharp illness which no human wisdom could foresee, or human skill relieve or cure, to take Joseph Gilfillan to Himself, to lovelier scenes than we can know of, there to join in sacred harmonies to which our best is discord. He had been troubled that he would not be in the choir this year, because his voice was changing, and he had sung so long there; but when he was told of what was coming, he simply said that now he would be in the choir forevermore. He was not alarmed or startled when he heard that he was going to die. His little plans about seeing his sister, and enjoying her company at home, were rudely overthrown; but he sent his love to her and a message that she must meet him in heaven. Then he observed that it was easy to plan, but not so easy to carry out our plans, that he had planned to meet his sister at this time, and now he would not. It was answered, that when we plan anything, we should say,

"If the Lord will . . . we shall do this, or that," as St. James bids us.[1] "Yes," he said, "that is what I did, for when I wrote to her that I would be with her last Sunday, I added, 'D. V., if God will.'" Whenever prayers were said at his bedside, he always calmed even in his delirium, and followed attentively, saying aloud "Our Father," and the "Amens"; and shortly before he expired, and after he had been wandering for hours, and had seemed oblivious of everything around him, suddenly he raised his arms upward at full length, and turning his face earnestly up to the sky, began to repeat the Lord's Prayer, and then other petitions for himself, though in a strangely altered voice as though from far away. Then, after long looking in silence earnestly upward, as if committing his soul to God, he dropped his arms by his side, and soon all was over. He died on Sunday morning, July 2d, while we were at the morning service in the old chapel, just as we were singing the 438th Hymn:

> Sing, my soul, adore His name!
> Let His glory be thy theme:
> Praise Him till He calls thee home;
> Trust His love for all to come.[2]

We had the commendatory prayer in the chapel at the same time that his father was saying it by him in the infirmary, and on Monday morning at eight o'clock, we had the funeral service in the old chapel, and the dear child was laid away to rest in our own consecrated

[1] St. James iv. 15. [2] Charles Wesley.

ground within sight of the School buildings until the Resurrection dawn. A wooden cross marks his grave for the time only. Soon a more permanent one will witness to a Christian's hope and unfailing confidence.

"Trust His love for all to come." Be that our watchword for this coming year. Let us not fail, by reason of our carelessness, or indifference, or ignorance, or secret sin, or unbelief, to lay hold of this immortal strength, this endless consolation, "to know the love of Christ." It is prayer, which gives the knowledge. Do you wish to know whether God is love? Pray to Him, and this will tell you as no words of man, no teaching can do. Do you wish to know how great the love of God is? Pray to Him more, and you will know better. He can "do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."[1] We know very little as yet, but we have every encouragement to trust Him from His word and teaching, from the conscience within us, and the experience of life which the years bring us. Seek to know His love by praying, by believing, and by doing. Then "trust His love for all to come." It cannot disappoint or fail us. Say to Him, "What I know not teach thou me, and lead me in the way everlasting."[2]

[1] Eph. iii. 20. [2] *Cf.* Job xxxiv. 32 and Ps. cxxxix. 24.

SERMON XXVI

CONVERSION

St. Matthew xviii. 3.

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

We cannot tell ourselves too often that it is the spirit and temper of our minds, the interior purpose we carry about with us, the bearing, so to speak, of our wills, which is the great matter of concern in the regulation of our lives. It is not the observance of sundry rules, nor the cultivation of two or three specific virtues, which determine what we are in God's sight. Faith, hope and charity are not so much distinct qualities as conditions or attitudes of mind. We can do nothing in the spirit of a Christian without faith and love. In a certain sense, the same virtue differs in a believer and an unbeliever, just as plants of the same kind may, because springing out of different soils. We are to be judged by our words and actions, only because these reveal our inward temper. A man might lead a thoroughly correct life externally, and have such entire self-command as never to utter an unguarded word, and yet the spirit and temper within him might be entirely alien to that

which the Gospel requires. Self-interest, worldly ambition, or a very cool and far-sighted reason might produce praiseworthy results of conduct, without a spark of real love to God, or thought of His approval. It is nothing to the argument that this is rarely the case, nor that, as a rule, men's evil passions defy, in one direction or another, any complete subjection, except that which is wrought by Divine Grace continually at work, converting and renewing the whole man. The point is that, no matter what a man's natural qualities or acquired virtues, our Lord requires in His disciples a changed will, and an inward struggle and desire to be conformed to His own blessed likeness.

It is All Angels' Day, and it is right that our thoughts should dwell on those invisible hosts who excel in strength, whose delight it is to serve the Lord, to stand in His Presence, sing His praises, and do His pleasure. We are not Sadducees who believe neither in Angel nor spirit, and therefore have a very vague and uncertain hold upon the Personal Being of God Himself. Certainly the Holy Church throughout all the world believes in angels. Certainly the Holy Scriptures are full from first to last with the ministrations of angels. From the angels, who drove our first parents from Paradise and repelled the access of man to the Tree of Life, to the angel in the last chapter of the Revelation, who revealed to St. John the glory of the restoration, the true Eden, with the river and the Tree of Life Eter-

nal, the blessed pages are full of angels, executing the commands of the Most High, warning and punishing, promising and supporting; the guardians of the righteous, the tender protectors of the little children, the antitypes of all the ideals of heavenly grace and strength and beauty which have ever lit up the human imagination and glorified the common, dusty ways of life with the jewelled hues and radiant, translucent airs of a better and lovelier world than man has made of this one.

Some day we hope that the large window over our chief entrance, the southern door, will speak to us of the angels[1] — that as, having said our prayers, and sung our hymns, we pass out from this chapel, we may raise our eyes one moment, for our encouragement and consolation, to the glorious figures in the two central upper bays, of St. Michael, the warrior and champion of God, and St. Gabriel, God's loving messenger of Salvation — two of the seven great Archangels who stand in the immediate Presence of God, and on either side of them a heavenly spirit who represents a great virtue to be sought and toiled for here — Abdiel, faithful among the faithless, the loyal spirit, and Uriel, the light of God, the angel of Divine illumination and knowledge, who taught the holy Esdras what men need so urgently to be instructed now, not to be curious of the

[1] This window was filled with stained glass, representing the Nine Choirs of Angels, the gift of the boys of St. Paul's School, in memory of Dr. Coit, in 1896.

high things, nor think to comprehend the ways of God. "And he said unto me, Number me the things that are not yet come, gather me together the drops that are scattered abroad, make me the flowers green again that are withered, open me the places that are closed, and bring me forth the winds that in them are shut up, show me the image of a voice: and then I will declare to thee the thing that thou labourest to know."[1] And then in the lower window, under St. Michael, the night at Bethel, and Jacob asleep with his head pillowed on a stone, and the vision of angels ascending and descending upon steps which lead to God. Below Gabriel, St. Raphael, the guardian angel, with the youth under his care, leading him in his perplexity, and standing by him in his danger. And on the one side, the angel of the Garden, who comforted our Lord in His Agony with what awe-struck tenderness, what inexpressible, superhuman sympathy; and on the other the angel of the Resurrection, who rolled away the stone from the Sepulchre for the women's sake in the early dawn of Easter. In the tracery above, from every opening, angel faces looking down upon the throng entering or leaving — looking down with unknown yearnings, as longing for the safety of each one, knowing of the art and malice and multitude of the spirits of evil, and rejoicing in every holy resolution, and every tear of repentance. The legend of the window — what should

[1] 2 Esdras v. 36, 37.

it be but the words of the Psalm, only in the beautiful ancient tongue: *Quoniam angelis Suis mandavit de te; ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis*" — "He shall give His angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways?"[1] So every true heart that leaves this Chapel after praying to do God's will here on earth, may commit himself securely to the succour and defence of the angelic guardians, who do God's will perfectly and constantly in heaven.

The keynote of the day[2] is set in the Collect, which recalls that wonderful order and Divine appointment by which the services of angels and men are ordained and constituted. The refusal of an intelligent being to obey God is a sin, and results in a departure from Divine order; which departure is evil, and all the evil there is or ever can be. The Epistle[3] exhibits the ultimate triumph of this order over the anarchy and rebellion of the spirits of evil, while the Gospel[4] enforces the lesson in its relations to us men. We must be converted, that is, our wills must be surrendered and we must accept the heavenly leading; then we shall have the heavenly guardianship. And woe be to those men who violate this order, and draw aside the younger and feebler brethren from obedience to God's will! In so doing they sin against the Divine appointment both for Heaven and earth. And in that

[1] Ps. xci. 11.
[2] St. Michael and All Angels' Day.
[3] Rev. xii. 7–13.
[4] St. Matt. xviii. 1–11.

day, when shall "come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ,"[1] they shall be cast down with "the accuser of their Brethren," and that Holy Will shall triumph, which men, alas, now abuse their privilege of choice to thwart and disobey. We are told of that saintly man, Richard Hooker, that on the morning of the day he died, his friends "found him better in appearance, deep in contemplation, and not inclinable to discourse," and when inquiry was made as to his present thoughts, his answer was, "that he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; and oh! that it might be so on earth!"[2] For order is the principle of God's government. And the rule of that order is His perfect will. And as in Heaven the angels do that will absolutely, and their happiness is complete in doing it, so here on earth as individuals the discipline of our will is the work of our probation. "The will is the summit of the character, just as the heart is at its centre, and the understanding at its base." The will rules the man. Who then shall rule the will? That is the question. "Who shall be the greatest?" to repeat the question which drew forth our Lord's answer — "Who shall be the greatest in this little kingdom of the human soul?" In the words of the Divine reply: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little chil-

[1] Rev. xii. 10. [2] Izaak Walton's "Life of Mr. Richard Hooker."

dren, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Except ye turn from following your own ways or the ways of others, and submit your will to the law of God, that is, have no will of your own, but like an innocent child, who is still childlike, ask only, "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes: and I shall keep it unto the end,"[1] you can never take your place in God's Kingdom, which is one of order and holy submission, and not one of self-will, and rebellion. "Obedience," to use the words of another, "obedience to a legitimate law is a source of moral strength and power. What is obedience? Is it submission to a power that is superior to your own? No. Is it weakness bowing to strength? No. Obedience is submission to an authority whose claims are admitted. Obedience is an act of strength, not of weakness." In the great order of the creation those beings who stand above men in the ascending scale, who are higher than man in point of intelligence, in point of affection, in majestic strain of will, are they who excel in strength, because they yield a perfect obedience to a perfect law. "As in the material world the force of expansion is exactly proportioned to the force of compression that precedes it, so in the moral world we are able to act for God just so far as we have the courage to check and deny ourselves." Out of the many thoughts suggested to us by the angelic example of obedience and the duty of man, who alone

[1] Ps. cxix. 33.

can be crowned with glory and honour, by following it, I earnestly desire you to remember two: (1) That the conversion, of which the type is set us in ideal childhood, is that changed and docile will which accepts God's will, when once ascertained about anything, as final; and (2) That, if we are practising this will with all our hearts, trusting God's grace to help us, whether young or old, we have the angels, not only as approving witnesses, rejoicing in our success and commiserating our failure, but also as helpers, so that the most frightful solitude may be robbed of its terrors by the certainty of this companionship, and in the hours when human strength, whether of mind or body, gives way, the strength will be supplied to succour and defend us.

Where His people faint below
Angels count it joy to go.

I. For conversion is a state, or condition, not a momentary feeling. God's Holy Spirit may turn any one from evil ways and wishes by some strong impulse, or sudden visitation, but even that first turning is only the beginning of conversion, which must be kept up all a person's life, and can only be made really effective, if carried forward day by day,

Till every limb obey the mounting soul,
The call by Jesus given,
He, Who the stormy heart can so control,
The laggard body soon will waft to heaven.[1]

Our dear Lord enforced His blessed words by a touch-

[1] "The Christian Year": "The Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity."

ing example. Any child is precious. The little foundling, who has no heritage of earthly love awaiting him, who is the waif of the streets, with no prospect in the future but sin and shame, is precious. The dirt-begrimed features and bleached hair, the wistful eyes, the weird and hungry look, are pathetic beyond measure, because he is a little child just started out upon a wild and desolate journey. Even a heathen could think and say that "the greatest reverence is the children's due,"[1] with but a slight conception of the transcendent truth of his saying. He was impressed by the mystery of human life just beginning, and the possibilities of good or ill wrapt up in it. His blood tingled with indignation at the thought of any one's daring to taint the imagination, impair the conscience, or warp the judgment of a child. But he knew nothing of Christian childhood, nor of "the Young Child with Mary His Mother."[2] He knew not of that heavenly inheritance, into which our children are baptized, nor that a representative of each young life stands in the sunlight of God's glory watchful to help and guard his designated charge. He, Who carried the young children in His arms, drew a little child into their midst, when He would teach a great truth of His Kingdom, choosing what seem "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."[3] The old tradition tells us that the child was St. Ignatius, afterward the great

[1] Juvenal, xiv. 47. [2] St. Matt. ii. 11. [3] 1 Cor. i. 27.

Bishop of Antioch, surnamed Theophorus, one who had been borne or carried by God. It was he who long years afterwards, to his persecutor's question, "What then is the meaning of this Theophorus?" meekly replied, "One who carries Christ in his heart."[1] He was already, as a little child, marked out for the crown of martyrdom. Held in the arms of Jesus now, he was to live and die for Him. And our Lord said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." It was the true child, of whom our Lord spake, not the spoiled, disputatious, self-willed and selfish, precocious and self-conscious child, such as caricature the bloom and grace of childhood all over the land. The little Ignatius was a child, unconscious, humble, trustful, doing as he was told, with no pert and forward ways; led, and glad to be so.

And as he looked wonderingly up to the great teacher of men, in his childlike simplicity and perfect obedience, he was a type of that conversion, which we must all experience, who, though held in the arms of Jesus at our baptism, have since then sadly followed the devices and desires of our own hearts. For it is the heart of Christian wisdom to give up our will, to be moved by God's will; and obedience is the essence of Christian duty, of all duty, whether to God or man. And there can be no true manhood, which does not put on the spirit of a

[1] Martyrdom of St. Ignatius, Antiochene Acts, ii.

little child, his simple, trustful obedience, the spirit which prays only to be led.

> Keep Thou my feet — I do not ask to see
> The distant scene, one step enough for me.[1]

One is well on in the narrow way, who is leaving the heavy burden of self-will and worldliness behind him, and whose inward temper answers to his prayer, "Not my will, but Thine, be done."[2] "For what is a man the better for being thought greater by man, for a man is what he is in Thy sight."[3]

II. And the answering thought to this is — that for converted souls, as for little children, there is a sympathy through those unseen and higher orders of being, of whose existence the analogy of nature assures us as well as Revelation itself. No one of us carries on his patient struggle unwitnessed and uncared for. No one faithfully walks his daily round of tiresome duty unmarked and unhonoured. It may be that to-day the earnest desire in some young heart to serve God better and to make better headway in the onward road may add a new chord to harmonies we cannot hear, and clothe with brighter smiles faces of immortal beauty we may not see. If one of us is truly moved by sorrow for past sins, regret for lost hours and vanished opportunities, and so resolves in the strength of God's Spirit to bring forth fruit meet for repentance, we know that, in that world of light, the joy-bells will ring out,

[1] J. H. Newman. [2] St. Luke xxii. 42.
[3] "Of the Imitation of Christ": Book II., Chap. I.

and holy spirits congratulate each other, for has not our Lord said: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"?[1] My dear friends and children, there is a great dignity and glory in human life. Think of it — that as the little babe opens its eyes upon this mystery,

> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter darkness,
> But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
> From God, Who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy;[2]

that as it grows in years, it grows up to the imperial power of choice; and that it may in the right exercise of this choice become a king and priest before God forever. For our wills are ours to make them Thine, and that is the only fitting use to make of them, to be stamped with Christ's image and superscription, to be numbered with those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth,"[3] "not blindly with our blessedness at strife," to be cast out among those lost sheep who, in spite of all the seeking of the Good Shepherd, in spite of all the love and sympathy and heavenly guardianship of His angels, shall never be found. "It is a great thing to be even the least in Heaven where all are great. And here on earth it is a great thing, so to do our duty to God and bow our wills to His, that we should be ministered to by the angels, because we are heirs of

[1] St. Luke xv. 10.
[2] Wordsworth's Ode: "Intimations of Immortality."
[3] Rev. xiv. 4.

salvation." It is a great thing, dear friends, to be permitted here on this shore of time to join in that ascription to Christ our God in which the angels join: "We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father Everlasting. To Thee all Angels cry aloud, the Heavens and all the Powers therein. To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry."[1] And the end of the whole matter is that we should study to obey God and keep His commandments, as the angels do, for disobedience and ill-order make the angels nothing to us, and shame us before them; and what is the good of knowing about the angels, of talking about them, unless we have their ministry? And that we forfeit, if we forget our birthright as heirs of salvation.

[1] *Te Deum.*

SERMON XXVII

OUT OF WEAKNESS MADE STRONG

HEBREWS xi. 34.

"Out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

FRIDAY was All Saints' Day — the great world-festival in honour of that unknown "multitude which no man could number."[1] "In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die . . . but they are in peace. . . . For God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself;"[2] therefore they "live for evermore . . . and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious Kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand; for with His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them."[3]

It is a great blessing to have a living remembrance of the past, to realize our organic connection with it — that we belong to some greater past than our own, and can take pride in its glories. It is a discouraging sign of the times that people are breaking loose from all moorings, breaking down old landmarks, speaking carelessly or without enthusiasm of the great men of the

[1] Rev. vii. 9. [2] Wisdom iii. 2, 3, 5. [3] *Ibid.* v. 15, 16.

past in our own and in other history, and setting up to be a generation wiser than their fathers. A true self-respect makes one tender of his own past. It is a coarse and reckless life only, which breaks up that happy connection. Instead of having their days "bound each to each by natural piety,"[1] in the beautiful order which God has appointed, the unruly child becomes prematurely a turbulent youth; the forward youth snatches at what he esteems to be the prerogatives of manhood; the man, alas! in consequence of having no pleasant, natural childhood, and no fresh, pure-hearted, manly boyhood, around which to gather the sweet associations of memory, lives without a past. What are the dearest and deepest feelings of one man, therefore, another knows nothing of. He is riding impetuously, ungracefully, and often ruinously, the motive or the appetite of the hour. It is a glorious thing for a nation to have a past — a past worth remembering. It is a glorious thing to belong to a family, whose ancestors have been good and wise and useful men, who have no back records of shameful dissipation or dishonour to blush for. It is a blessed thing for the youth to hold on to the recollections of childhood, and for the grown man to revert with fresh, delighted interest to the days of his youth, to have a happy consciousness that his was a pure and natural and honourable growth, from the arms of his mother to the duties of active life. And the old

[1] William Wordsworth.

legend, around which the English novelist has woven such a pretty story, may well be a prayer for young and old: "Lord, keep my memory green." It is an *inexpressible* loss to have nothing sweet and bright in one's past to look back upon.

'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all. [1]

But whatever the past of one's nation or family may have been, whatever the character of those years to which memory is sponsor, there is a great inheritance, a crowned and sceptred lineage, to which every member of Christ may joyfully lay claim. There is a great Society, to which our ties are nearer, closer, and yet farther reaching than to any earthly country or family. Our birth may have been the humblest, our nation the feeblest among the tribes, our own history only something to forget; but in this society we have a past, and a past which does not win its glory from its being far. In this great Society we live in the past, we are one with past ages and generations, and they are one with us. Even in this nineteenth century, with its hard and unbelieving heart, its idolatry of money and mechanical improvements, its hurrying, tearing machine life, we may hold ourselves one with the saints of the far-off generations, who have long since been gathered into Paradise, and may rest in the thought of their Rest. Enoch, Noah, Abraham are ours. They are our ances-

[1] Tennyson's "In Memoriam," xxvii.

tors, who walked upon this earth, the humble, faithful, accepted servants of the Lord. It may not be in our power accurately to reproduce the scenes and surroundings of their earthly lives, or to imagine the unworn beauties and simplicity of that ancient world — the Ark, with its safe company, floating over a submerged earth, or the groves of terebinth at Hebron; the black tents, the bleating flocks, and other pastoral accompaniments of the patriarchal camp; but nevertheless we can realize that we are one with Noah and Abraham, when we read in the chapter, from which the text is taken, that the one became heir of the righteousness which is by faith, even that righteousness through which alone we hope to be accepted, and that the other looked for a city, the same city which we also look for, "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."[1] For all the saints are one, both of the Old and New Testaments, and they are ours, so far as our end is the same as theirs — the conquerors by faith in One Who was yet to come; the goodly fellowship of prophets, the priests and people who in their day "wrought righteousness and obtained promises";[2] Daniel, who "stopped the mouths of lions"; the three children, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, who "quenched the violence of fire"; Elijah and Elisha who "escaped the edge of the sword" — all, who "out of weakness were made strong" — they all are ours, if we are Thine. It is our privilege to

[1] Heb. xi. 10. [2] *Ibid.* 33.

remember and hold fast our close relation to the members of that old Jewish Church. "Know ye, therefore," says St. Paul, to the Galatian Christians, "that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."[1] And as we descend the stream of time, and reach the days of Our Lord's Forerunner and His Apostles, how pleasant and how comforting it is to remind ourselves of our union with them, in our union with their Saviour and ours!

> We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
> Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.[2]

The memory of the saints is blessed — not only those few great names, "the glorious company of the Apostles," in the calendar, but also those thousand thousands of uncalendared saints, unmentioned in the world's history, unhonoured by human song, from the Apostles' days to ours — "the noble army of Martyrs," men, women and children, "once like us with suffering tried, but now with glory crowned."[3] Known or unknown on earth, honoured or despised among men, they are known to their Lord. Their souls are in His hands. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."[4] Men may forget; but the Divine Memory fails not, and not one of them shall be unrecognized at the last, who for the love of Christ have denied self, wrought righteousness, and endured

[1] Gal. iii. 7.
[2] Bishop Walsham How.
[3] Scotch Paraphrases.
[4] Ps. cxii. 6.

unto the end. Why, most of us have a calendar of our own — written upon the table of the heart — of one or more departed friends, separated from us for a while, but whom we know to be safe in the shelter of their Lord. Some of you have a mother who was a saint here on earth, and is remembered now with all the saints in glory everlasting. Or a father who loved and cared for you, whose place will never be supplied, who left you the legacy of a good example and an honoured name; or it is a little child, who was the joy of your home, and whose memory comes up to you with reminiscences of all beautiful, lovable things. Or we may have a friend in that place of rest, beside whom we have lived, as we are prone to do, seeing clearly his weaknesses and the small motes which impaired his character, and not really appreciating the noble qualities, not knowing him for a saint, accepting all his good, even his love and service to us, as a matter of course, criticizing, withholding the kind words and actions that might have helped and sustained him in his labour and cheered him on. Now he has "gone into that world of light."[1] And the veil has fallen from our eyes, and we know that he was one of Christ's hidden ones here, and is now a glorified spirit waiting for the resurrection.

Of all these we think rightly as numbered with the saints. "With what earnest desire do they long and wait for us. As those on shore look out for friends

[1] "Friends Departed," by Henry Vaughan.

who are still abroad on the dangerous sea, all whose dangers and troubles they once knew, and now have forever escaped. Safe are they, in that peaceful haven which is the bosom of Christ and of God."

Do not let us forget them. Let us feel that they are near us and one with us. They were ours while they lived. They loved us with true and steady love. They are ours now. They love us more than ever. Let the thought of them hallow our daily lives. Let it rouse us to do our duty, to combat our besetting sins, to hate lies, and all mean and hard and subtle ways, and to be faithful unto death, that we may meet them one day, and share their triumph and enter into their joy. Do not let us forget them. The world forgets. The cold-hearted and the selfish and the ungrateful forget. Let us never forget our dead, who are dead to earth but are alive to God.

The text gives the summary of the earthly history of the Saints Departed. The same for all: "Out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." They succeeded; they conquered; they have reached the end of their labours. Need we ask how, or in what kind of a struggle? In the struggles for success and pre-eminence among men a strong body is needed, a strong intellect, a strong will. All these are desirable gifts. The stronger one is in every way, the more service he can render in his day and generation. But in that great

struggle which is going on invisibly around us, in which we are all taking part, whether we know it or not, on one side or the other, human *weakness* sometimes achieves greater results than human strength. I have known the feeble-bodied and the weak-minded to do more on God's side in this struggle than those whom you would look upon as naturally the leaders and the champions. Women often do more than men. I have known a weak mother conquer herself and a whole family for God, while the father perhaps was fighting on the wrong side. Oftentimes her prayers and faithfulness have, at last, won over the strong man. It is not the best-balanced mind, nor the coolest temperament, which in this conflict always succeeds the best. I call to mind one peculiarly open to temptation, full of impulse and passion, with strong undercurrents in his fleshly nature drifting towards deadly sin, roused to a perception of his great weakness and his fearful danger, and with the consciousness at the same time of a Helper and a Strength external to himself, which might be his own. I have known such an one "out of weakness made strong." I have witnessed his conflicts with flesh and blood, with a rebellious and wayward nature, till Christ gained the upper hand, and the mouth, which had uttered the words of profanity and anger and obscenity, spoke only the words of truth and soberness. And the mind, which had been tainted and defiled with corrupting images and desires, came to be,

however tempted, preoccupied at last with that One Example, Whom all the Saints have followed, and with the one work of bearing that Cross, which all the Saints have borne. There was no lack of valour, indeed, in the human nature, but there was superadded the higher valour, of standing up for Christ among the trifling and ungodly. There was a deep sense of unworthiness, and a sorrow for the past sin, which could never be assuaged; but there was a growing energy of resolution, which steadied the whole character, and enabled one who had been morally of the weakest to put to flight whole armies of his enemies and God's. Yes, my brethren, the mighty struggle is still going on. Hundreds and thousands are falling on this field of battle, or are carried away captive, bound hand and foot by the adversary, who all the while, to outward appearance, are in the full vigour of their years, with gay words on their lips, and laughing glances in their eyes. Here and there is one who has set himself to do right, to obey God and work the works of righteousness. He may be young in years, but, young or old, it is the *wise* choice, it is the great choice. It is the choice upon which Heaven hangs, and his mansion there and crown. It is the noblest sight which earth affords. It is the noblest which Heaven witnesses on earth. He may not, probably does not, realize all that he is doing. He goes on quietly and humbly. He would smile to be told that his little daily struggles were of any great account.

Yet the angels pause on their errands of love to watch his efforts. They rejoice over his little gains and progress. The Eye of his Lord rests approvingly upon him. If he perseveres to the end, there shall be a reward which the world cannot measure. There is nothing he would think more unlikely than that he should ever be, or be called, a saint. Yet he is taking the way by which the saints became what they were, and reached what they *are* — viz., by duty faithfully, perseveringly discharged, by loving and choosing and holding fast the service of the Lord.

And if it is such a great thing in God's sight to resist temptation, to renounce sin, to do His work in this world of evil, what do you suppose it is for one who knows what his duty is only too well, who has every imaginable encouragement and inducement to stimulate him, perhaps the wishes and prayers of those who are nearest to him on earth perpetually put forth in his behalf, yet goes on foolishly, recklessly, following the devices and desires of his own heart — turning his knowledge of good into poison, and the helps in his way to his own condemnation? Not that he is altogether bad. Oh, no. There is a momentary effort, it may be, some little trifling result, a very small struggle, just enough to satisfy an easy conscience, and to prepare the way for his enemy's greater triumph another time. What little he does, done in his own strength. No substantial valour or resolution whatever as against

himself. No putting "to flight the armies of the aliens," but rather the making truce — the playing a double part — the finally surrendering all that is best and worthiest in him to the devil's service and not to the Lord's. If the good and holy, who have gone before us, can see one of their fellow creatures playing such a part, if they from the abodes of rest witness the delinquencies and follies and wickedness of men, what must they think of such a life? If angels weep over the lost as they do rejoice with exceeding great joy over the found, what tears for such a self-destroyer must angels shed! Still more, how must the King of Saints regard one who, so far from having an interest in the blessed and sanctifying memories of "the Holy Church throughout all the world," is making himself, by his own act and choice, as it were, "a stranger from the covenants of promise, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel,"[1] an exile and an outcast from the household of all saints both here on earth, and above, in the Sanctuary of God! "They shall be wiped out of the Book of the Living, and not be written among the righteous."[2] Well, whatever others do, we have each our part to perform. We can pray and work for those who are now by the tone and influence of their daily life setting themselves *against* their Lord, whose very strength of body and mind is thus becoming weakness. But, oh, my brethren, let us be roused by the thoughts of all the good and holy,

[1] Eph. ii. 12. [2] Ps. lxix. 29.

in the past, and the present, "to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light."[1] The year is passing by fast enough, the leaves are falling. Presently we shall drop from our places before the wintry blast of death. *Then* what will follow?

Those who are *now* on their Lord's side, who are *now* doing His work, shall find Him on their side then in the hour of their greatest extremity, when flesh and heart faileth. Those who are now *witnesses* for His righteousness and truth among their fellows, will find Him their advocate and intercessor.

Thou, in the darkness drear, their Light of Light.[2]

Those who have struggled to do their duty in much tribulation, "sown in weakness, shall be raised in power,"[3] and to their great wonder and joy shall find that the victory is theirs through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The Saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of glory passes on His way.[4]

And so "it is written: Such honour have all His Saints."[5]

[1] *Vide* Rom. xiii. 12. [2] Bishop Walsham How. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 43.
[4] Bishop Walsham How. [5] Ps. cxlix. 9.

SERMON XXVIII

THE PASTORAL HEART

St. John x. 11.

"I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

The calling of the Christian is a high calling. The Christian life is above the world while in the world, and being in its essence unseen is moved by influences and impelled by motives loftier than belong to nature, just as its end and recompenses are not bounded by time, and rise in all their glories beyond the desolation of the grave. Every Christian child knows that "Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him,"[1] and that that likeness implies the mystery of a new creation, the old and evil element continually dying, and the new and heavenly one rising and gaining strength and bearing fruit which is immortal. As in these autumn days we see death and life side by side, the old growth is fading and passing away, while in the wondrous processes of Nature earth even now is teeming with the preparations and the seeds

[1] Office of Baptism.

of spring. It is the Life of the New Man Christ Jesus begun, however imperfectly, in His baptized, which is the principle of the Christian life. It is begun and fostered here, it is beaten and buffeted and cast down, but not destroyed in any honest heart, for the strength which sustains is not its own, and it is heir to "the power of an endless life."[1] Such is the Christian calling, that every true child of God may be rightly addressed as king and priest, belonging to a royal priesthood of which the head is the Great High Priest, in Whose Sacrifice we have a part, we too offering up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."[2] But distinct from, though participating in, the calling of all Christians, there is a higher vocation still, of a priesthood of a more special sort, of men called forth from the ranks of the baptized, subjected to proper training, ripened by sacred studies, disciplined by faithful service in a subordinate office, to stand forth among their fellow-men as Christ's chosen representatives, to feed the flock of Christ, to witness to God's truth by word and deed in the midst of an unbelieving world, called pastors or shepherds after the Good Shepherd, and deriving all their powers and prerogatives from Him. He is priest indeed in a far different way than any earthly representatives of Him can be. For He is priest because of that union of the two natures, "whereby He is mediator between God and man."

[1] Heb. vii. 16. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 5.

His priests on earth by His institution perform those offices, which both to themselves and to their brethren are the appointed means of union with His Mystical Body. No wonder that in the charge, which we shall shortly hear, the ordinands are exhorted to "have in remembrance into how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge they are called"[1] — Messengers, or Angels, Watchmen, Stewards of the Mysteries, Dispensers of the Word of God. Holding forth the gift of pardon to a world of sinful and sin-distressed beings, it seems as though language was exhausted in setting forth and illustrating their office, that those who enter upon it may realize its high sacramental character, and the awfully solemn obligations by which they are bound. The words come instinctively into the heart: "Who is sufficient for these things?" I least of all. Write, then, I beseech Thee, Thy law in my heart by the finger of Thy Spirit, that what my head knows, my heart may love, and what my heart loves, my actions may perform and my whole life exhibit. The subject is too extended and weighty to be presented at this time. May I be permitted to dwell upon a few thoughts only connected with the pastoral office, which the text suggests, and echo another's prayer, that the words which I shall utter may not one day be brought up against myself to my own condemnation? For the priestly calling is in the high-

[1] The Form and Manner of Ordering Priests.

est sense to follow Christ, the work is Christ's work, the flock is His, not ours, the office is His own appointment, it holds its gifts and graces from Himself. His is the example of how the work is to be performed: His the pattern of the personal life of those whom He condescends to employ as His under-shepherds. He says: "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His Life for the sheep." None can be *the* good, but each of His own pastors must strive to be *a* good shepherd, after His likeness. None but He can say: "I give My Life for the sheep," and yet every one of His true pastors must give his own individual life in such a sense to the work, that for the work — that is, to seek souls and win them, to guide souls and keep them, to feed souls and save them — he is ready to lay it down. If we are partakers of His Life, we are partakers also of His Cross, and like His great Apostle, though self-knowledge and self-distrust keep us from the presumption of using his words, we shall come to understand the feeling which led him to say: "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."[1]

The Good Shepherd's shepherd must seek first of all therefore to have the pastoral heart. The Heart of Jesus Christ is the home of all His people. With that Heart, He intercedes for them one by one. He knows

[1] Acts xx. 24.

their individual sorrows, and trials, and sympathizes truly and understandingly with each one. He looks upon them not merely as units in one mighty whole, but He calleth them each by name with the same omniscience by which He counts and names the stars. His heart is full of a tender, unchanging care. His watchfulness slumbers no more than His love ebbs. It is no partial and capricious affection, which singles out some to the exclusion of others, and values superficial qualities, accidents of earth, more than that inward truth which is the ore out of which saints are made. To Him all souls are dear. He knows the price which He paid to ransom them, and none are too insignificant for His regard. His heart is all-embracing. It has thought and love for all. Therefore His flock can never become too large, nor Heaven's mansions too narrow for the multitude of His redeemed. The Heart of the Good Shepherd bleeds to-day for the sins and the sorrows of the world. He yearns for the hearts groping in the darkness of unbelief and practical paganism. He suffers in the sufferings of His Church, in the perversions of the truth, in the contentions and disorders occasioned by lawlessness and self-will. If one of the members of His Mystical Body suffers, the Head suffers. Each one may say with the Psalmist: "Thou tellest my wanderings; put my tears into Thy bottle: are not these things noted in Thy book?"[1] His is the true pastoral Heart,

[1] Ps. lvi. 8.

pleading at this hour in the most Holy Place: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold My glory."[1]

We poor sin-hindered mortals at our best can but faintly image to ourselves the infinite longings, the boundless compassions, which fill the Heart of our Good Shepherd; but yet in our degree, narrowed though we are on every side by the poverties and infirmities of earth, His faithful priests must bear some likeness to their Master. And as the heart determines what the man is, without the pastoral heart the duties of our high office can be but coldly and imperfectly performed. One may go through the outward service respectably, nay, to the admiration of his fellows, with but little of those inward kindlings of desire, which alone can conform him to the Chief Shepherd. For one large part of the priestly office is altogether unseen, and for it the heart alone is responsible. I mean the work of intercession. As Jesus Christ ever liveth to make intercession for those who come unto God by Him,[2] so we are to take part in this act of His Priesthood. This is a very prayerless age, because so unbelieving. Even Christian men think far more of preaching than they do of prayer. And yet there can be no effective pleading for God in the pulpit which is not preceded by an earnest pleading with Him in the closet. The ends we aim at, or at which we ought to aim, being mainly

[1] St. John xvii. 24. [2] *Vide* Heb. vii. 25.

spiritual, are to be attained by spiritual means. Prayer is the great instrumentality for the conversion of individuals, for the renovation of communities, for the edifying of the faithful, the spread of the Gospel, and the conversion of the world. And therefore the true pastor, laying claim to the one meritorious Intercession, begins all his work on his knees, uniting his poor prayers with those of the Great High Priest, and bearing in his heart the names and individual wants of those among whom and for whom he labours. Does one neglect the Holy Sacrament? Is another careless in attending the public worship of the Sanctuary? Does this one's life belie his profession? Is that one living in some open, wilful sin? The first and last resort is prayer. The Divine influences cannot be excluded by bolted doors. The most careless can be made to think by God's merciful providences, the most impenitent can be brought to repentance by His loving Spirit. And when no eye of man is near, and the curtain of seclusion is drawn, Christ's pastor will be doing his most telling work, the work which culminates in the highest priestly office, when he stands Sunday after Sunday before the Altar, and pleads the one Atoning Sacrifice for his own sins and the sins of his people. And as he prays for all, so he feels with all. The sympathy is unfeigned, because it is in the heart before it reaches the lips, and finds expression in tender, thoughtful acts and ways more readily than in words. It is unbought, and therefore those

have it first who need it most, and can never make any return; and those also share it who might make some return, but will not. His heart is made tender by his own share in the difficulties and sorrows and disappointments of life, and it is kept tender by the love of Christ, and the thought of death, and the great shadow which eternity casts over this present wayfaring. All are fellow-sinners redeemed by the one Saviour. All are fellow-pilgrims, travelling on together with various lets and hindrances, to the judgment-seat of Christ. And so the pastor's heart makes allowances for the perverse and erring. And he is always ready to strengthen the weak, and heal the sick, to bind up the broken-hearted, to restore the outcast, to seek the lost. Every evil that besets humanity calls forth the energy of his nature to counteract or relieve it. Where his powers fail to reach it, he raises the hands of supplication, and seeks an intervention which can help "when earthly armour faileth," and which can save "when deadly sin assaileth."[1]

And as the direction of our Divine Lord to St. Peter was, "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep,"[2] and is repeated by the Apostle himself to all who follow in the order of the priesthood, "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind,"[3] the pastor's heart is full of care-taking and

[1] Lowenstern: *Tr.* by P. Pusey. [2] St. John xxi. 15, 16. [3] 1 Pet. v. 2.

watchfulness for those entrusted to him, seeking in every way to teach them the things which are necessary for their happiness and salvation. He longs that the youngest should know something of the sweetness of the Gospel, and that, as they grow in years, God's word should become more to them "than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."[1] As all the day long, according to the opportunities his life affords, his own study is in it, so he strives, by every art he knows, to win others to know and cherish and live by the Holy Scriptures, that "through God's commandments they may get understanding: and therefore hate all evil ways."[2] To fulfil this duty of feeding the flock, he must know them separately and give them separate thought and care. And seeing them at their own homes, and exercising such individual interest as may be in his power, catechizing, instructing, admonishing as may suit each case, more is done for edifying than in any public teaching, important as that is, and never to be forgotten in the pastoral work. I am recalling now only in a very general way some of those aspirations and purposes with which the pastor's heart is filled, and in which in his vocation he shares in the Good Shepherd's work, and so far as the will, and the desires of his heart can do it, gives his life for the sheep. It is far-reaching and wide-embracing, this pastoral heart. It is alive to all the interests of the

[1] Ps. xix. 10. [2] *Ibid.* cxix. 104.

whole estate of the Catholic Church, wherever planted throughout the world. The work of Jesus Christ is everywhere one, whatever barriers of division, distance, diversity of language, national character, misunderstanding, or prejudice erect. And all those of whatever degree who labour in that work are one, and the true heart rejoices to own it.

> "All may save self; but minds that heavenward tower
> Aim at a wider power,
> Gifts on the world to shower."[1]

All missions, all works of Christian love and charity, all true efforts to elevate and help men anywhere rouse up his enthusiasm, and command his interest. And this instinct of universal love and care saves one from being narrowed down to his own little field of labour, or exaggerating the importance of his single work, just as to set the pastoral value on a single soul keeps one from ever thinking any work small or unworthy, by which even remotely one such soul is blest. It follows even from this brief and fragmentary outline, that the first essential to the priest's office and work is the possession of this pastoral heart. Without it, there can be no true pastoral life. The performance of outward duties will be perfunctory or unreal. The highest calling on earth will degenerate into a mere profession or business, a mean struggle after popularity, personal comfort, place and power. How can one give his life to seeking, leading,

[1] J. H. Newman: "The Power of Prayer."

feeding, and guarding Christ's little ones, unless he has first given his heart to Christ? How poor and shallow the character must become of any one whose aim and spirit are far below the dignity of his vocation! I say nothing of a stained conscience and an unholy life. In the very nature of things, a faithless, unworthy pastor is more guilty than any of those whom his neglect or bad example leads astray, and will meet a far deeper condemnation.

Turn for one moment our minds to the One altogether perfect Pastor of the pastors. Both our life within and our life before men must be modelled after His. He is our pattern, and to Him, when overwhelmed by the thought of our tremendous responsibilities, and the amazing gifts entrusted to our stewardship — to Him we turn our last and first, our strength and our strong Helper, in Whose Name we go forth, on whose arm we lean, into Whose heart we pour our misgivings. Why need we fear? "He knoweth whereof we are made: He remembereth that we are but dust."[1] "His grace is sufficient for us." "His strength is made perfect in weakness."[2] If we but give ourselves, our whole lives, our all, to be His consecrated priests and servants, as He gave His Life for the sheep, and if He sees that the surrender is hearty and entire, we may go forth, as did the shepherds of old on the mountains of Israel, in storm and sunshine, summer's heat and

[1] Ps. ciii. 14. [2] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

winter's cold, bearing His Cross and working His work. And He will show us how. And the great priestly act, in which we plead His Sacrifice, is forever repeating ours, that He may make our hearts His shrine, till we can say: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."[1]

And so, my friend and brother, in the very greatness of the pattern which I, unworthy, dare to set before you, I remind you and myself of the greatness of the Love which calls you to the work, and in it shares, and will sustain you. I know that the warm and willing heart, the truth-loving, earnest nature, the ripened experience, the zealous fidelity which are yours, are at this hour with due deliberation and entire singleness of purpose placed at His feet, Who calls you to receive the office of a Priest in the Church of God. At this most solemn of all moments in an earthly life, the comfort is that He is the Good, the Merciful Shepherd, and that, while he calls you to the pastoral work, He will be your Shepherd, and therefore you can lack nothing. Whatever it is which hinders your work, you can ask Him at all times to take it away, and from the affluence of His Love to supply what is wanting. He will increase in you the holy calmness, the holy thoughtfulness, the loving and watchful sympathy of the true pastoral heart. And as He walks amid the golden candlesticks to-day, holding the seven stars in His right hand, He will listen to the prayers of your friends and brethren, here and else-

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

where, that He will "lift up the Light of His Countenance upon you";[1] that "your light may so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven,"[2] until He Himself, "the Chief Shepherd shall appear, and you shall receive from His rewarding hands the crown of glory which fadeth not away."[3]

[1] Num. vi. 26. [2] St. Math. v. 16. [3] 1 Pet. v. 4.

SERMON XXIX

THE ZEAL OF THINE HOUSE

St. John ii. 17.

'The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up."

We are not told that these words were spoken; but that they were called to mind by our Lord's discourse, when they witnessed His holy earnestness in vindicating the sanctity of His Father's house, and cleansing its outer court of the profaners. The act in itself was a wonderful display of Divine indignation against a monstrous sacrilege. His followers saw a young man, only thirty years of age, Whose ordinary movements were calm and self-controlled, Whose temper was never roused by personal slights and indignities, Whose words and deeds were replenished with the meekness of wisdom, standing in the vast quadrangle which surrounded the noblest pile of buildings the world has ever seen, and gazing with horror and shame and kindling anger at the base traffic which was proceeding there — the baser, because the end was held to sanctify the means, the exigencies of the Temple tribute and worship affording the pretext for a system of usurious exchange and merchandise which filled the coffers of Annas the

High Priest and his unworthy sons. The young man with His few poor attendants stood in the midst unnoticed, possibly flouted by the insolent retainers and menials of the Temple. But *He was the Lord of the Temple*, and He had come to His Father's House, and He was "like a refiner's fire and like fuller's sope."[1] And while He looked on at proceedings which dimmed the fine gold of the Temple's ornaments, and effaced the lustre of its marbles, His holy wrath increased, the Divinity shone out through the Humanity, and single-handed He drove out the crowd of hirelings, and the scourge of small cords became in their eyes like the rod of vengeance of the Almighty. Of course, it was a miracle. They were overawed, and shrunk away before Him, and no one seems to have offered any resistance, even the tacit opposition of the chief priests and Pharisees, under whose patronage this profanation was sheltered, barely revealing itself in the question, "What sign shewest Thou unto us, that Thou doest these things?"[2] The disciples remembered, when the hour was past, these words of a Messianic Psalm.[3] Their memories were richly stored (as would to God all our memories were!) with blessed words of Scripture, and they saw in this great action a fulfilment or an illustration of words which when first uttered may have had a nearer and less exalted application. "The zeal of Thine House hath eaten me up." A holy jealousy for

[1] Mal. iii. 2. [2] St. John ii. 18. [3] Ps. lxix. 9.

Thine House, for its sanctities and ceremonies and glorious worship, hath consumed (or, with another reading), yea, and will consume me. As everywhere in the Psalms, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy House: and the place where Thine honour dwelleth."[1] "We wait for Thy loving kindness, O God: in the midst of Thy Temple."[2]

The words may be reverently used for our instruction and profit on this occasion, when we have met together to unite in the joyful consecration services of this holy and beautiful house,[3] and our hearts are filled with congratulations at this onward step in the history and progress of another of the Church's schools for the training of the young. They may be said to fit the occasion, for our poor zeal is kindled, we humbly trust, at the Altar of our King and Saviour, and assuredly pure zeal for the honour and glory of His Name filled her heart who has built and furnished this lovely sanctuary, and a like zeal will still maintain the work of this school and animate its worship. "*Ad Majorem Gloriam Dei*," is the invisible legend of these walls; "*Ad Majorem Gloriam Dei*," the uplifting motive which day by day and year by year will carry on the sacred work, and make it true of this centre of the school's life and environment. "All my fresh springs shall be in Thee."[4]

I need not stop to prove to this congregation that we,

[1] Ps. xxvi. 8.
[2] *Ibid.*, xlviii. 8.
[3] Chapel of the Holy Cross, Holderness School.
[4] Ps. lxxxvii. 7.

as Christians and as members of Christ's Holy Church on earth, should be inspired with zeal (proceeding from the lower to the higher), first, for the externals of the Divine worship; second, for the spirit and reality of that worship; third, for those who worship with us as well as for ourselves; fourth, and above all and embracing all, for the Lord and King and Master of the House, Whose the members are, and the grace that makes them His, the worship and all the visible accessories that belong to it.

I. And first, zeal for the externals of Divine worship — to begin with what we all consider as of secondary importance — is called for and justified. The alabaster box of precious ointment was dear to our Lord, because of that faith and love for Himself which prompted the offering. Only when we are dull to the Divine Presence are we in danger of being too much occupied with its shrine. David's desire to build a worthy temple, and Solomon's execution of his father's purpose, were both approved by the Almighty. And we may be sure that in our day it is right that our best should be offered in the erection of the earthly Sanctuary; that the highest art should be the Church's handmaid; that the building, both without and within, should be a witness and a lesson of holy reverence and loving devotion; that from the western entrance to the Altar end the eyes and heart of the worshipper should be prepared for the great Mystery of Christian worship; that storied window

and carved work, and rich and suitable colouring and skilled use of metals in studied moderation should all combine to "make the place of His feet glorious,"[1] up to the utmost measure of the ability of those who build, and to the continued training and educating by the eye of those who worship. In the stone churches, which line the St. Lawrence and the Saguenay among poverty-stricken populations, I have been touched beyond measure by the humble decorations brought to their sanctuaries by those simple-minded Canadians. What seemed tawdry and mean to me was their best and prettiest, and it was their offering; and faith and love make the mean things of earth beautiful in God's sight and the widow's farthing like the ransom of a king. Only everything should be real and in proportion — in proportion to our culture as well as our means.

And loving zeal will show itself in small details as well as in the general plan. Whatever concerns the rendering of the service should be the best. The music, the vestments of the clergy, the surplices of the choir, the manner of reading the Word of God, the saying or intoning of the prayers — all should be with care and an ever-ruling thought of His Presence, to Whom the choicest service of our lips as well as of our heart is due. Slovenliness is objectionable anywhere; but it is impious in the house or the worship of God. And this holy place is to be the blessed seat of training to hundreds

[1] Is. lx. 13.

of boys who shall here uplift their voices day by day in hymn and chant and choral service, shall join heartily and audibly in the responses, showing here what should be illustrated everywhere, the blessedness and inspiration of common prayer, prayer in which all join with voice as well as will, making the "Amen" like the sound of many waters, singing or reading the sweet words of the Psalms lustily and with good courage, so that the zeal of the outward and visible worship shall be contagious, and that "one coming in that believeth not, or one unlearned in the lovely ways of Catholic Christendom, shall be convinced of all, shall be judged of all, the secrets of his heart be made manifest even to himself, and so falling down on his knees, with bowed head and covered face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."[1] For outward reverence in God's worship is like good manners in society. The outward begets the inward, and as, in a very subtle sense, it is true that "manners makyth man,"[2] so it is also that reverence not only becometh, but maketh Christian.

II. And when we pass on to the spirit and reality of that worship, the inward *manner* of the inner man of the heart, then indeed zeal for His House should consume us. It is in the light of His Incarnation that we realize that the spiritual is in absolute accord with the real and the human, that the outward dignity and

[1] *Vide* 1 Cor. xiv. 23–25. [2] Motto at Winchester College.

beauty of our worship, while it does not constitute, is thoroughly consistent with, its true glory, outward and inward, corresponding to our twofold nature, body and spirit, which He took upon Himself, "when He humbled Himself to be born of a Virgin."[1] So our inward and our outward worship must correspond, to be truly acceptable to Him Whom we worship, and both together make up that beauty of holiness which He requires, and for which He taketh pleasure in His people. Day by day, in this holy place, the youthful worshippers and they who unite in and lead their devotions, will pray that they may "show forth His praise not only with their lips but in their lives."[2] They will beseech Him to "grant them true repentance, and His Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which they do at this present; and that the rest of their lives hereafter may be pure and holy; so that at the last they may come to His eternal joy."[3] Those who sing will be taught to ask "that what they sing with their mouths, they may believe in their hearts, and shew forth in their lives."[4] And all will learn in the blessed words of the Catechism that our duty to God demands the whole heart, and mind, and soul and strength, and that only fervent and diligent prayer will be richly answered by His gifts of grace. For Christian practice rests upon Christian principle, and those who enter this place,

[1] *Te Deum.* [3] Declaration of Absolution, or Remission of Sins.
[2] General Thanksgiving. [4] Prayer for Clergy and Choir after Service.

where the Divine Presence is covenanted in the Holy Eucharist, and, in a more general way, wherever two or three are met together in His Name; where from this day on a special sanctity will abide, and angels will be on watch and guard even when men are absent, those I say who enter here remembering this Presence, the counterpart of the cloud and glory which filled the tabernacle and the temple on Mt. Moriah, will be led to an awful apprehension of the Divine Majesty and a deep sense of their own unworthiness, and so approaching His Sanctuary with lowliness and devotion, and coming before Him with clean thoughts and pure hearts, with bodies undefiled and minds sanctified, we may humbly hope and believe that they will always perform a service acceptable to Him. As one of our own departed saints has said: "When Holy Baptism is known and believed to be union with His Life-giving Humanity, when Christian training is the rearing of a child as the temple of God, when thronging crowds, trembling yet believing, know that their Lord is present in His own Eucharist, then will benediction descend, then will sorrow be changed into joy, then will souls be filled with the peace that passeth understanding."

III. Again, we must remember that this Chapel, as indeed are all our churches, is to be the centre of a common life, where those meet who belong to one communion and fellowship, members of One Body, of whom St. Paul says, that "whether one member suffer

all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."[1] And the true members are living stones "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone;"[2] growing into a holy temple acceptable to God, knit together by that which supplieth every joint, namely, by that continual supply of that Holy Spirit, Whose unity we are to "endeavour to keep in the bond of peace."[3] And this is really God's true temple on earth, made up of faithful worshippers, the members of Christ, in whom He dwells, collectively and individually in the Church on the large scale, and in each congregation as a miniature of the whole. "It is this Presence of Christ in us, this approach to God in one Body in Christ, which God acknowledges and which makes our worship acceptable and prevailing." And so the worship is a common worship, not isolated, selfish, subjective, but with all, for all, through all. And in a school, of which this Chapel is the bond and centre, and the life is a distinctly community life, this oneness of the Body should be ever in mind, making the zeal, which we sometimes call loyalty, for the welfare of individuals as forming part and parcel of the whole, characteristic of the place. What a noble field of labour! What kindling of enthusiasm! So that, as a holy French writer says, "if St. Paul or St. Augustine were again to appear on earth, they would choose no higher,

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 26. [2] Eph. ii. 20, 21. [3] *Ibid.* iv. 3 and 16.

no more useful life than to be simple teachers of youth." How blessed a work to stand by these young souls, to bear with their petulance and ignorance, to love them, to train them in the Church's holy and satisfying ways, and then rejoicing to bring them here one by one to the sevenfold gift of Confirmation and the light of His Presence in the Holy Communion, Whom knowing now by faith they may hereafter enjoy the fruition of His glorious Godhead! The true zeal of pastor and teacher will always find some response in the hearts of those taught and cherished. The heavenly fire in one heart does not smoulder; but it warms and kindles other hearts. And from this Chapel will begin and spread and live for God's glory that loyal devotion to the interests of this School on the part of all who belong to it, which will claim adequate expression in the words of the Psalm: "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love Thee. Peace be within thy walls: and plenteousness within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes I will wish thee prosperity, yea, because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good."[1]

IV. But after all, my dear friends and brethren, zeal for the Lord's House, for the material structure, for the externals of Divine worship, for the worship itself, which must be "in spirit and in truth,"[2] and for our fellow-worshippers, children of the one household,

[1] Ps. cxxii. 6–9. [2] St. John iv. 23.

members of the one Body, is, or ought to be, if it is to be approved and acceptable to Almighty God, zeal for the Lord Himself, the King and Master of the House, Whose Sacramental Presence within these walls makes every brick and timber sacred, Whom duly to recognize when we enter His courts, and rightly to magnify as we perform its service, will make our worship real and earnest, full of the awe which creatures should feel toward their Creator, full of the love with which the ransomed of the Lord should glow, whom He hath redeemed from the hands of the enemy. For no zeal for His outward and visible worship will please Him, which is not the fruit of love and zeal for Himself. He is the Saviour of His Body mystical, and its offering is rendered acceptable, because He identifies it with the actual offering of Himself. His Presence here is a Real Presence, though not bestowed according to the order of nature. The visible is not more truly present than the Invisible. It is, to use the words of another, "when the Holy Eucharist ceases to be regarded as a real action wherein Christ's true Presence is exhibited on earth, and whereby prayer is truly rendered available, men fall back upon some other system of approaching God, and with a change of belief comes a change in the principle of worship. Thus do individual prayer and private faith and single piety take the place of that collective action whereby the whole Church was supposed in ancient days to offer itself to God, and are supposed

not only to be necessary, which they are, to the Christian life, but to have right in themselves to acceptance. Whereas nothing has a claim to acceptance but the Sacrifice of Christ, and it is the oblation of the perfect Head which gives efficacy to that of the imperfect members." There is a Presence for us and a Presence in us, a Presence which we find, and a Presence which we bring. And this Presence must surely be found in us in proportion as our hearts are prepared to contain it, are severally temples, in which He is welcomed with devotion and humility. We come to the daily services here, therefore, in the blessedness of our Communion with Christ. Here we seek to rise, through the mystery of the Incarnation, to the level of communion with God. We pray in Christ to God, that Christ may pray to God in us. He is not a God afar off. He is our Emmanuel, God with us. We give ourselves to God, that God may give Himself to us. Thus it is that our hearts may be trained to His perfect love and service, till the zeal of His House shall consume us, and it may be said of us as of a great saint of old: "*Talis est Basilius*," "Basil is such a one, he is all on alighted fire for God." In the Name of Jesus will be the beginning; in the help of Jesus the prosecuting; to the praise of Jesus the ending of every work and separate bit of service, as of every day and week and year.

The night becomes as day,
When from the heart we say,

May Jesus Christ be praised! . . .
Alike at work and prayer
To Jesus we repair;
May Jesus Christ be praised.[1]

And all the work of a school like this is uplifted and redeemed from routine and drudgery, when it is consecrated to Jesus Christ and done for His sake and in fulfilment of His commission. It is the Church's right to teach the young, and there is no wise or adequate education which does not rest upon the foundation of religion, and it has always been the Church's endeavour, however imperfectly, to obey her Lord's injunction, "*Feed my Lambs.*"[2] On the front of good Dean Colet's noble edifice of St. Paul's School in Henry VIII.'s time was this inscription in Latin: "This School is for the instruction of boys in the Faith of Christ our Holiest Almighty Lord, and in all useful learning. Anno Christi 1510." And in the great schoolroom at the upper end was a statue representing the Holy Child Jesus in the gesture of teaching, and under it a Latin couplet composed by the learned Erasmus, which I may freely render:

My children learn of Me, and virtuous habits frame,
And such good knowledge as befits My Name.

It was the pious founder's chief desire that the Childhood and Youth of Jesus should be the boys' example, as the rule and original of wisdom and purity of life.

[1] Translated by E. Caswall. [2] St. John xxi. 15.

For Jesus is the grace of childhood as He is the strength of manhood, and the hope and consolation of age; and to love Him with all one's heart and soul and strength is the crown and glory of the liberal education — I had almost said the education itself; for after all, to know Him is life eternal, and without the knowledge of Him the soul is dark, the intellect is chilled and motiveless, and the spiritual reason undeveloped and unexercised in that for which it was given to us. It is indeed true, my friends and brethren, as De Koven said: "If the Sacraments of the Church and its system of training were allowed their full scope and work, not one child in a thousand could possibly fail to grow up into the perfect measure and stature of the man in Christ." And if this is so, how should we, who are called to this work of Christian education, be filled with holy jealousy for the honour of our Lord and the faithfulness of His promises, seeing the actual state of things around us, and that the world, the flesh, and the devil do root up and devour "the place of the vineyard that His right hand hath planted, and the branch that He made so strong for Himself"?[1] O that of us it may be true, "*the zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up*" — that to Jesus Christ and His dear service we may devote ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, with all their powers and faculties, that our understandings may be enlightened with the illumination of the Holy Ghost, and all the

[1] Ps. lxxx. 15.

wishes and desires of our wills may centre in what He has commanded!

One can hardly fail, on a marked day like this, to look back and to look forward. Past, present, and future pass in review before us. I recall the former days in this Diocese, when several of the clergy as often as they met discussed the feasibility of starting such a school as this. None doubted its necessity. It was a cherished plan for years of the good and venerable Archdeacon Balch,[1] whose last work for the Master was in this neighborhood, whose quiet grave hallows the precincts of the ancient house of prayer hard by, whose honoured widow by her generous offer enabled the Bishop of the Diocese to secure what for its purposes seems to me the finest and the fittest site in the whole state. Our dear Dr. Hubbard,[2] whose memory is precious, to the day of his death desired to see this sight. May we not trust that in the green pastures of the Land of Rest he knows what has been done here, what we are doing to-day, and rejoices in the educating of his good son as a firstfruits of this work for God? For even when men seem helpless, prayers are answered, and seed is sown in holy purposes and desires for good, of which the harvest comes in distant years. We stand to-day upon the threshold of the future, and see around us the results of wise and careful

[1] The late Ven. Lewis Balch, D.D., some time Archdeacon of London, Ont.
[2] The late Rev. Isaac Hubbard, D.D., some time Rector of West Claremont, N. H.

planning on the part of our good Bishop and his helpers, and of the rector's[1] most admirable, conscientious management (and he really bears the burden and heat of the day); and the verification of the foresight which has sought to supply a crying need, so that the School justifies itself, and is itself the most powerful argument for its own existence. And then our thoughts run on to future years and generations, to growing success and usefulness, until this land of our inheritance is filled with faithful Christian men and intelligent Catholic Churchmen, living the life and bringing forth the fruits which befit members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. A few years hence, and what hallowed associations will cluster around yonder Font and Altar! How many will trace their first holy impressions to the lessons here received! How many will here form their first conception of the beauty and the reverence which are becoming in God's worship! And thus by a natural sequence one is led upward to that celestial city and "house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens,"[2] and to that blessed worship, the true antitype of what we strive for here. What is the Temple there? "*The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.*"[3] And who will be the worshippers? Many, many, dear friends and brethren, who have worshipped here, who are here trained to live as they

[1] The Rev. F. M. Gray, first Rector of Holderness School.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 2. [3] Rev. xxi. 22.

pray, and to "sing praises unto His Name, for it is lovely."[1] "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb."[2] "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."[3] And what shall be that beatific worship? St. John has told us: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."[4]

Blessed shall we be, if we learn to live now in the presence of saints and angels, who are to be our everlasting companions hereafter! Blessed, thrice blessed, if we live in Him, Who is the Lord of saints and angels, and He in us! "In Thy Presence is the fulness of joy."[5] The zeal of Thine House is only Thy living immortal Love, kindling in our poor earth-encumbered natures a spark of heavenly flame. Light that torch in this Place. Kindle that fire in the hearts of all who worship here, and then the outward and visible will be but foretastes and shadows of the eternal. "Except the Lord build the House, their labour is but lost that build it."[6] But

[1] Ps. cxxxv. 3.
[2] Rev. vii. 14.
[3] Zech. viii. 5.
[4] Rev. v. 12, 13.
[5] Ps. xvi. 11.
[6] *Ibid*, cxxvii. 1.

listen to His sustaining promise, which we believe that He will fulfil to this School and all who belong to it: "I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."[1] God grant it, and fulfil our hopes to-day! And may these words of our lips and meditations of our hearts be "acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our Strength and Our Redeemer!"[2]

[1] Is. liv. 12, 13. [2] Ps. xix. 15.

SERMON XXX

STABLE AND STRONG

Acts vi. 15.

"And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

The words, as you will remember, are spoken of St. Stephen, the first deacon and the first martyr of the Christian Church. We learn that he ministered as deacon to the necessities of the poor widows who belonged to the Christian community, and, we may infer, to all others of the sick, needy, and sorrowful in that district of the city of Jersusalem consigned to his care. In these ministrations he did "great wonders and miracles among the people."[1] He moved among them in the full power of the Apostolic commission. He spoke and taught in the All-Saving Name. Five noted synagogues in Jerusalem are mentioned as the scenes of his patient, strong, and triumphant vindication of the Faith as it is in Jesus. The Christian teaching at that time must have been almost wholly oral. No Gospels had as yet been written. The Apostles taught the faithful, inspired by the Holy Ghost as from the

[1] Acts vi. 8.

very lips of Jesus Himself. No doubt, the Creed was already formulated; but it came with living force and the freshness of a mountain spring from those who had been eye-witnesses of the great body of facts to which it testified. This oral teaching was incessant. It was largely catechetical. It was also largely historical and dogmatic. The sort of vague exhortation, a grain of doctrine dissolved in a flood of declamation, which passes current for preaching at the present day, seems to have been wholly unknown to the first Christian teachers. There was a definite Faith, which led of necessity to a definite practice. The Old Testament scriptures were searched and analyzed, and found to bear witness, from Moses to Malachi, to the Incarnation and the Resurrection of the Lord. As is declared in the Revelation of St. John: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."[1] In this work of instructing, proving, controverting, defending, the deacon Stephen was conspicuous. We can picture him in the synagogue of Cilicia, confronting the eager Saul of Tarsus, and sowing the seed of the Gospel, which was ere long, by God's special grace, to produce such glorious fruit. Even the impetuous, prejudiced Saul was silenced for the time. Neither he nor the others, rabbis or lawyers, were "able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."[2] They could not refute his arguments; yet argument alone does not win men to Christ. Their

[1] Rev. xix. 10. [2] Acts vi. 10.

hearts were hardened, though their reasons were convinced. They turned, as people do nowadays, when defeated in argument, from reasoning to accusation. They caught up a popular cry; they declared, by the agents they suborned, they had "heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."[1] The like charge had been brought against St. Stephen's Lord and Master. And having dragged him before the Sanhedrim, their false witnesses repeat more formally the indictment: "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."[2] Then it was, as he, the brave deacon, the witness and messenger of Jesus Christ, stood, the focus of all eyes, the centre of the council's contemptuous and hostile gaze, that "looking steadfastly on him, they saw his face, as it had been the face of an Angel." We may be sure that this comparison is not introduced by way of ornament. There is a lesson of sober edification within it, if we can find it out. There is no mere word picture of angels in Holy Scripture. We derive small help from the imaginations of men. The saints, who from the beginning have had visitations of angels, have not enlarged upon the circumstantials of the scene. Apparently, they have forgotten the messenger in the transcendent nature of his

[1] Acts vi. 11. [2] *Ibid.* 13, 14.

message. St. Luke, we may be sure, does not mean merely to tell us that St. Stephen's face was beautiful and radiant with conscious innocence, truth of purpose, and entire trust in God. All this no doubt, but more. It was Stephen's commission on earth to bear the message, and to perform the will of God. The message was a Heavenly one. The truths which formed its subject were not of earth, but of Heaven. The holy angels also are God's messengers. "Angel" means messenger. St. Stephen's mission, therefore, was parallel on earth to that of the angels in Heaven. As it is beautifully expressed by the poet:

> Ye, who your Lord's commission bear,
> His way of mercy to prepare:
> Angels He calls ye; be your strife
> To lead on earth an Angel's life.[1]

We may ask, then, what special type of outward aspect a man like St. Stephen would have in common with Gabriel, for example, the archangelic spirit who stands in the presence of God? We read in the Psalm "O praise the Lord, ye angels of His, ye that excel in strength."[2] Strength, therefore, we may believe to have been the special characteristic of Stephen's bearing and look on that great day of his trial. He was, we read, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,"[3] "full of faith and power."[4] For as St. Paul wrote long after to the youthful Timothy, "God hath not given us the spirit

[1] The Christian Year:" "The Second Sunday in Advent."
[2] Ps. ciii. 20. [3] Acts vi. 5. [4] *Ibid.* 8.

of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."[1] God's messengers, whether in Heaven or on earth, are called to be strong. They may be gentle, tender, pitiful. Their bodily presence may be weak; their speech in the eyes of their fellows so halting and deficient as to excite their contempt; but if they are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might,"[2] for all that, they will carry the Lord's message as He would have them, and like St. John the Baptist and St. Stephen manfully confess the Faith, and, in their day and generation, make ready the way of the Lord. We may believe that strength, not of earth, but of Heaven, sat upon the young deacon's countenance — strength, like that of St. Michael, to contend before rulers and kings for the Lord's sake, which "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly upon him, saw," although they failed to perceive that Immortal Source from whence it came.

The prescribed subject for the instruction at this service is "the duty and office of such as come to be admitted deacons."[3] And we still pray, at the close of the Communion Office, that they, or he, who is ordained to this first degree of the Gospel Ministry, "having always the testimony of a good conscience, may continue ever stable and strong in Thy Son Christ."[4] "Stable and strong." The *imprimatur* of the Church seems to

[1] 2 Tim. i. 7. [2] Eph. vi. 10.
[3] The Form and Manner of Making Deacons. [4] *Ibid.*

confirm our exegesis. Let us examine then, for a few moments, the strength required, the strength prayed for, (may I not add?) the strength imparted in the Apostolic Act, in which faith sees the uplifted hands not only of Christ's commissioned representative, but indeed of Him Whose Hands were pierced for our salvation, Who has promised to be with His Apostles and their successors to the end of the world.

The strength in which the angels excel is, first of all, the strength of conviction. They are sure of their post and duty, and of Him Whom they serve. They have no doubt or uncertainty to slacken their energy, or to divert their fixed obedience. In all their ranks, nearer or remoter to the Throne of the Most High, they have but one heart and one voice, though the number of them is ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. The confidence of a certain faith made St. Stephen's face like one of theirs on the day of his final witness. God's messengers, whether heavenly or earthly, need the strength of conviction if they are to go straight forward on His errands, faithful among the faithless, and bear His message without error or evasion. In our day, a man's usefulness in the Ministry depends upon the clearness and completness of his faith. It is an age of compromise, of breadth so-called without depth, and palliation of a spurious liberality which amounts to indifference and unbelief. How can a man teach his fellows God's Revealed Truth unless he

knows it himself, and believes it with all his heart, and mind and soul and strength? Whatever excuse should be made for the ignorant, and the imperfectly instructed, for invincible prejudices arising from inveterate habit, and the mistaken training and examples of others, there can be none for one who enters upon the holy functions and responsibilities of the Apostolic Ministry, with no grasp of the essential verities of the Catholic Faith, with the idea in his mind of a sort of eclectic religion, which singles out such truths as it deems preferable, and treats the constitution and framework of the visible Kingdom of our Lord as mere ornament and finish, but in no way vital to the very existence and continuity of the Body of Christ on earth. Catholic theology, which is the same thing as the teaching of the Apostles, and the Faith of the Gospel, admits of no divorce between Apostolic order and Evangelic truth. The order came from Him Who taught us the truth and Who is the Truth, and cannot be separated from it. It never can be granted by any correct thinker that the one is so distinct from the other that a man may have one without the other, as he may know geometry without knowing Greek; or that the rites of the Church are mere matter of external order or arrangement, independent of the substance of the Gospel, instead of being involved in its essential idea. Christ's minister must lay firm hold of the central fact of the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord and Saviour, and learn in its develop-

ment the three Creeds, the Ministry, the Sacraments, the supernatural gifts, of the Catholic Church. If the so-called Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States is but one sect among many, if her Ministry has not powers, claims, and a commission different to that of any of the numerous divisions of protestantism among us, if her Liturgy is only a matter of taste, and her Eucharist merely an outward badge of a Christian profession, there is no ground for our allegiance to her, or enthusiasm in her service; there is no call for sacrifice, for there is no sufficient object to call forth sacrifice. Unless the Life of Christ flows through the channels of grace in the living Body to all its members, unless there is a connection between the Ministry of this Church and that in which the first deacon exercised his office, more historical, immediate and divine, than that to which any of the various Christian bodies around us can possibly lay claim, then our service to-day is unmeaning, nay, indefensible, and there is no foundation for the strength of conviction which carries a man on, in spite of difficulty and opposition, of prejudice and misapprehension, because he knows what the Faith of the Gospel is, and on Whose word it rests, and believes it with all the energy of his nature, because he realizes that behind him, feeble as he is, and mighty as are his antagonists, he has the supernatural powers and sanctions of the Church of the Living God, and that it is God's truth, of which he is put in charge. There-

fore, he cannot falter in his message, he can afford to be patient and large-minded and loving. He knows that his Risen Lord and Master is with him, and will be with him unto the end of the days. The question will presently be asked the ordinand: "Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?" And that must mean: "Do you believe them as God's most Holy and undefiled Word? do you receive them at the hands of His Apostolic Church and in accordance with her interpretations and traditions? Do you impose a limit on your private judgment and speculations in these sacred precincts? Do you receive with implicit faith the Old Testament as interpreted and applied by our Lord and His Apostles? Have you that strength of conviction which will arm and assure you in this day of random conjecture, presumptuous assertion, and unsanctified self-will? Do you fully realize that you are not to be original, nor build on your own foundation? That were you a Bacon or a Newton, you would have none other foundation than that which is laid, namely, the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head-corner-stone?" We may be sure that strength of conviction is indispensable to strength of purpose, and he must have a strong purpose indeed who surrenders himself, body, soul, and spirit, not only to serve God as all men ought to serve Him, to their life's end, but also in that nearer, loftier service which makes God's work in the

world the business of one's life, and turns all one's daily tasks into the preparing and making ready of His way. The angels are filled with a mighty purpose. If our eyes were opened to the things unseen, we should see them around and above us, bent on their blessed errands of mercy and warning, reinforcing the faint-hearted, uplifting the fallen, waiting in joyful anticipation at the bedside of some poor Christian to receive the soul of the dying. They have but one purpose, to "fulfil His commandment, to hearken to the voice of His Word."[1] And so must it be with Christ's ministers here on earth. They must not be trying to serve two masters, and so to divide and apportion their allegiance. They are set apart for one end. Their standard and measure is wholly different to the standards and measures of the world. To save one soul from eternal loss is worth the toil of a lifetime. Results are not ours. It is not necessary to stand in a Cathedral and proclaim with the eloquence of a Lacordaire the truths of the Christian religion to admiring thousands in order to obtain the Lord's seal of success.

> Faith's meanest deed more favour bears,
> Where hearts and wills are weighed,
> Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
> Which bloom their hour and fade.[2]

When St. Stephen's soul was possessed with his great subject, the inward illumination appeared to light up

[1] Ps. ciii. 20.
[2] J. H. Newman: "Flowers without Fruit."

his countenance with an unearthly fire. There was a Divine strength of conviction and a corresponding strength of purpose, and add to that an undying strength of love, and no wonder that his face glowed with the radiance of Heaven, and that the message with which he was charged transfigured the messenger. And so we come to the last and supremest source and spring of strength, the Love of Jesus in full possession of the heart, the Love that makes light of toil and sacrifice and privation, that accepts loneliness because no place and no hour are lonely where Jesus is, the Love that is driven by human griefs and bereavements to cling more closely to the Incarnate Lord. That Love keeps a man up to his prayers in private and in the daily office which the Church has appointed. He continues instant in prayer, not as though going through offices and prescribed forms was of itself so good and meritorious, but because the strength of love is in them, and psalms and hymns and collects and litanies become more and more to the true heart, are unconsciously the breath of life which his soul pants for, the appointed way of drawing nigh to the One Whom his soul loveth. That Love sends a man out on his quiet daily round to do and plan manifold deeds of loving-kindness for his fellows, to watch for small occasions, to disregard no tender courtesies, to withold recrimination and abstain from unprofitable controversies, to seek to advance the Lord's Kingdom by building up rather than by pulling

down, to rejoice in seclusion, if God's will can be done in seclusion, and to shun notoriety and the empty praise of men. Need I add that the Love of Jesus draws Christ's minister more and more habitually to the Altar of his joy and gladness, to the Blessed Sacrament of His Dying Love? There in the Sacrament is the secret of Christian strength, for in it is "our own Jesus Who loved the poor, wept over Lazarus, consorted with sinners, comforted the sad, still feels more anxious to save us than we to be saved. Our Blessed Brother, let us pour out our hearts before Him and beg Him to make us love Him more and more."

I turn to you, my pupil, friend, and brother, in this most solemn moment of your life. I recognize the simplicity of faith and hope and love that have drawn you onward year by year to this threshold of your desire. And now that the hour of your anticipation has come, and you are to be admitted to that first degree of the Gospel Ministry, in which the glorious Martyr St. Stephen was your predecessor, may you, like him, be filled with faith and with the Holy Ghost! May you excel in strength as God's messengers and pursuivants, the holy angels, do, that the inevitable human weakness and deficiencies may be supplanted and fulfilled with the grace from on high! For "weakness is aye Heaven's might," and our sufficiency is not of ourselves but of God. It is an auspicious day, on which you take up this light yoke and burden of Jesus. The

Sunday before the great Christmas Festival, and it is not long to wait, "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,"[1] the Feast of His Apostle, St. Thomas; and may you "so perfectly, and without all doubt, believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, that your faith in His sight may never be reproved!"[2] Yesterday we sang the Advent antiphon, "*O Oriens*," "O Morning Dawn, O Sunrise of the heart," and we rejoice that the Day-spring from on high hath visited us. May He rise upon you to-day with healing in His wings, and may He be from this day on, in a new and deeper sense, the strength of your heart and your portion forever!

[1] St. James v. 8. [2] Collect for St. Thomas's Day.

SERMON XXXI

CHILDREN OF LIGHT

EPHESIANS v. 8.

"Walk as children of light.

LIGHT is necessary to our well-being. We can do no satisfactory work without it. We cannot securely guard ourselves against dangers, real or imaginary, if light is removed. Our bodily health depends upon the light of the sun. Certainly, in a large degree, our enjoyment of life does. A bright day is welcomed by man and beast. No artificial light, however perfect, can compensate for the absence of sunlight. As the morning comes up from the East, bringing with it a clear sky and an unclouded sun, we unconsciously rejoice in it, as all nature does. It brings every day the joy of a new creation. Darkness flees; pestilent vapours, whether of mind or body, seem also to vanish in the glory of the dawn.

Holy Scripture, as you know, is full of the highest poetry. One lesser reason why the Bible is so disparaged and set aside in our day is because this generation is becoming more and more indifferent to the noblest efforts of the imagination. Men's attention, nowa-

days, is chiefly absorbed in material interests and what is supposed to advance them. Many would hardly turn from their commonplace animal pursuits to listen to an angel, speaking in the accents of Heaven. Perhaps they would altogether fail to hear him, just as, to all intents, they fail to hear, or rather to discover, the music of psalms, and the oracles of prophecy, the exquisite charm of the Gospel history, or the depth and tenderness of our Blessed Lord's teaching. Simple and true hearts appreciate true poetry. What possible interest can a vicious man take in Dante or Wordsworth or Herbert or Keble? Still less in the loftier, divine poems of David and Isaiah?

On the other hand, the deepest and most sacred truths may be laid hold of by innocent children and plain persons who have seen little of the world they live in, whose inward eye is, notwithstanding, clear and single to see the things of God. As in the old liturgies —"Holy Things to the Holy," which to the unholy are, as our Lord warns us, as pearls to swine. The highest things are revealed to us by figures, e. g., in those great words of St. John — "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all."[1] And in the passage of the Ephesians, from which the text is taken: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light. . . . All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever

[1] 1 St. John i. 5.

doth make manifest is Light. Wherefore he saith," whoever wrote the ancient hymn from which the words are quoted, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee Light."[1] How our thoughts are led on and upward! Even now, darkness is no hiding-place to deeds and thoughts of sin. Even now, shameful secrets and plots and evasions are self-revealed. Those who harbour them, their authors and abettors, know themselves for what they are. There are moments when the liar confesses to himself, "I am a liar," and the thief to himself, "I am a thief," and no human being is so hard and callous as to enjoy this self-unfolding. And the time is coming when deeds and thoughts that skulk and hide will be laid bare in the searching light of the Day of God. What good will dark corners, and smooth unblushing faces, and false pretences, and excusings of self and accusings of others, be then? There will be no merit in confession then, for it will be a forced confession, and no more chance for pleading His Cross and Passion, which are now availing to wash away our sins. Therefore come to the light now, argues St. Paul. Bring to the light your false, evil ways, drag them out of their lurking-places now, by your own voluntary act. Do not wait for their involuntary, hopeless exposure. You can have no light in your heart or life, till you have uprooted this bad growth, this fungus of darkness. Do we not

[1] Eph. v. 8, 13, 14.

understand this imagery? Is it a question what the Apostle means? Do not honest and pure persons get strength and comfort from the sense that they have nothing to hide, that at least it is their settled purpose to have nothing? Whose daily prayer is — "Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me: and lead me in the way everlasting"?[1] If one is really a child of light, there must be a happy consciousness of being so — that at least he has entered the initial stage, that, though great darkness of sin and sorrow and shame prevail in the world around him, still Christ's light is shining, and he is walking in it. No earthly night can be so dark, that its shining is wholly overcast, and if one means to follow on until death's night is merged in the dawn of Paradise, there he can wait in hope and peace for Heaven's fuller day. "For His Salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land."[2] What is surprising and intolerable is the dulness and obtuseness of multitudes to the brightness and loveliness of God's eternal truth. "The desire for light is one of the most impassioned desires of our nobler nature." "The wish for light, the expectation of the manifestation of God, is the mystery which lies beneath the history of the whole ancient world." Think of the wonderful change that our Lord's coming made to earnest and true hearts in that old pagan society. Before He came, there was the deepest mental darkness,

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 24. [2] *Ibid.* lxxxv. 9.

uncertainty, and confusion, on the highest of all subjects. The best and noblest heathen held fast to a hope that their spirits would be immortal; but not one could conjecture that their bodies would rise again. The life beyond the grave, at which they guessed, was at best but a half life, because a bodiless, incomplete existence, of which they had no experience. And how, pray! were they ever to get rid of the yoke of sin? How could remorse be stifled, when deeds had been done which never could be undone? What motives of sufficiently constraining power could be infused into a man, when the tempest tide of his passion was up, and even his selfish interests were no barrier to its gratification? What were they to do, when the sole ray of earthly sunshine, the brightness of human love, went out, without explanation and beyond recovery, and there was no hope beyond, and no present consolation? What could that old heathen life have been with no Sundays or Sacraments, no Christian Year, no Psalms and hymns and Creeds, nothing to reveal a sure and certain hope, on which man can lay hold even here, and become strong and victorious over all his sins and all his temptations? It was indeed a thick darkness of mind and soul, such as we are unable to conceive. For, however poor a use we make of the light, we can never be as though the Day-spring from on high had not visited us. Perhaps one reason why the higher intellectual life of our day seems impoverished, and more or less unpro-

ductive, is because faith's light is so dim and many clever men and women have lost their faith and are turning their backs upon the one source of truth and enlightening. As the prophet says: "They sacrifice unto their own net, and burn incense unto their own drag."[1] That may explain why much of the current literature, both in periodicals and printed books, is so trifling and superficial, the poetry grotesque and strained, the fiction untrue to nature, coarse and sensational, the speculation unbaptized, arrogant, and misleading. One is struck by the loss of moral as well as mental power. Men are smart and versatile enough; but what they write is without depth or helpfulness or seriousness of conviction. We cannot go back to the old heathenism, if we would; without the Christian Faith we are greatly worse off than the old heathen.

"*Dominus, illuminatio mea.*"[2] Man is at his best intellectually when he is humbly and reverently looking upward for light and leading. "To kneel and adore is the noblest posture of the soul." "Be sure all the universe tells of Christ and leads to Christ. The stars speak the mind of Christ." Many poor souls in lowly cottages, reading nothing but their Bibles, are drinking in from the Fountain of Wisdom, and their souls are lighted from on high, their perceptions are refined and uplifted, and in His light they come to see light, they *see* infinitely further into the realities of eternal truth,

[1] Hab. i. 16. [2] Ps. xxvii. 1.

than many another highly-educated, and with every advantage of position, who has renounced his dependence upon God and the Revelation of God,and makes use of his reason chiefly to search out reasons why *not* to believe in God's Holy Word and in His Only-begotten Son.

"*Walk as children of light.*" Of course the main reference is to conduct, to thought, word, and deed, to bringing forth that "fruit of the Spirit," which Saint Paul tells us "is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth."[1] If we are sincerely anxious, ourselves, to come to the light and to live in it, and to bring forth its fruits in our daily lives and conversation, we may be sure that our understandings will be enlightened with the light of the everlasting Gospel, and our higher imaginations be quickened to witness unerringly to those wonderful and glorious truths, which we are taught to confess with our lips. For moral light is a far greater and more indispensable thing than intellectual light, and, as one says: "The light which is in us is darkness, if it seems to show in us the Trinity, and the Incarnation, and the works of the Saviour and the Church, and yet does not make us loving and pure, forbearing and forgiving, after the pattern of the Son of God."[2] The reading "fruit of the light," seems more correct than "fruit of the Spirit," for children of light are light's fruit and offspring, and "by their fruits ye shall know

[1] Eph. v. 9. [2] Rev. M. F. Sadler *in loco.*

them."[1] Holy Scripture does not recognize a vast no-man's land, in which there is neither light nor darkness, but a gray, mental atmosphere, where grope the multitudes who, being neither children of light nor yet children of darkness, are children of suspense and double-mindedness, a sort of moral chameleons, changing their colour according to their company, and perpetually varying the course and character of their lives. So far as God's Word goes, we *must* be one thing or the other. What we really are in God's sight depends upon what we really mean to be. We cannot be children of the light, and wilfully bring forth, and do, the deeds of darkness. If we are living in falsehood, not deliberately, but every now and then, when it suits us, planning a lie, if not actually speaking one, then we must be far away from that centre of light, which God is in true and honest hearts. How much is covered by the word Truth — loving the truth and doing it! Untruth is even untrue more in action than in word. Of course a habit of untruth belongs to cowards, is unbefitting a gentleman; but it is far more than that. It forfeits our birthright as Christians. It is a condition to *dread*. An older person may tell what is practically a lie, to cover up his ignorance, to seem more learned, or more sensible than he really is, or to save his self-love from being wounded. But any form of untruth is an unfruitful work of darkness, and the habit of falsehood, while

[1] St. Matt. vii. 20.

there are penalties enough in this world to deter one, has its worst and final issue in shutting us out forever from the Light and Smile of God.

Again. If we are living for ourselves, doing no work of love and kindness for any one else, indulging in harsh words and cross tempers when we feel like them, even to those who are knit to us by the bonds of human relationship; if we take pleasure in the discomfort or discomfiture of another, and like to see him wince at our unfeeling roughness, or coldness and unkindness, then we are walking in darkness, for there is no true light where love is not, and "in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is *not* of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."[1] Think of those all the world over who deliberately plan to wound and thwart and trouble and vex others; who delight in malicious mischief; who resent another's steadfast goodness and faithfulness to duty as if it were a wrong to themselves; who scatter what the Lord would fain gather into his bosom. Are not such manifestly children of darkness? Surely, now as always, "the foundation of the Lord standeth sure . . . The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."[2]

In making practical use of these thoughts, my friends and children, let us not waste our inward purpose upon

[1] 1 St. John iii. 10. [2] 2 Tim. ii. 19.

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their application to others than ourselves. Let us simply come, each one so far as in him lies, to the Light which Christ our Lord is — come, everyday — *quietly*, *steadily*, of *set* purpose. We come to Him in daily prayer, in the habit of inward prayer, of referring to Him in our difficulties and annoyances and temptations. The Light of His Presence shines on our Altars, veiled in its effulgence, so as to encourage us, not blind us nor dismay. Do we dread a certain hour, its work, its embarrassments, its strain and contradiction? Ask Him, with one brief uplifting of the heart, to glorify Himself in us, to give us grace, however it turns out, to glorify Him. When we are by ourselves, in the daytime, or awake at night on our beds, let us ask Him to hold us fast by Him, that in His hands we may fear no influences of evil spirits, and no disquiet of vain and idle thoughts, and that He would quicken our cold and dying hearts by drawing us close to "His wounded Heart, which is a heart of fire."

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